ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

November 2004

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House of Assembly
Nova Scotia

Hon. Murray Scott
Speaker
House of Assembly
Province House
Halifax, Nova Scotia

Dear Mr. Scott:

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Human Resources, I am pleased to submit the Annual Report of the Committee for the First Session of the Fifty-Ninth General Assembly.

Respectfully submitted

Mr. Ron Chisholm, MLA
(Guysborough - Sheet Harbour)
Chairman
Standing Committee on Human Resources

Halifax, Nova Scotia
November 2004

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FOREWORD

The report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources is written in accordance with the rules and procedures of the House of Assembly. First, outlining the role of the committee in regard to approving or not approving applications to provincial Agencies, Boards and Commissions. Second providing a brief summary of witness / topics that came before the committee as assigned to within the committee's mandate.

MANDATE

Functions of Standing Committees

60 (2) For greater certainly, The Human Resources Committee is established for the purpose of

(i) considering matters normally assigned to or within the purview of the Departments and Ministers of Education and Culture and of Labour,

(ii) Reviewing and approving or not approving candidates for appointment to agencies, boards or commissions where the Governor in Council has, pursuant to an enactment, the sole discretion to make the appointment or where the Governor in Council makes the appointment by choosing from a list of nominees provided to the Governor in Council pursuant to an enactment,

(iii) reviewing and approving or not approving ministerial appointees to agencies, boards or commissions where, pursuant to an enactment, Governor in Council approval is not required, and

(iv) for purposes of greater clarity and certainty, the Committee shall be guided by the terms of reference set out herein and which form part of this rule;

TERMS OF REFERENCE IN REVIEWING AGENCY, BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS:

1. Where Governor in Council approval is required for an appointment to an Agency, Board or Commission, after consideration by Executive Council of a person recommended for appointment to an Agency, Board or Commission, the Clerk of the Executive Council shall submit the name of the person to the Human Resources Committee, on form "A".

2. Prior to making a Ministerial appointment to an Agency, Board or Commission for which Governor in Council approval is not required, a Minister shall submit the name of the proposed appointee to the Executive Council for consideration. Where the Executive Council recommends the name, the Clerk of the Executive Council shall submit the name to the person to the Human Resources Committee.

3. Committee members shall review the name submitted for approval having regard to qualifications of the individual, affirmative action concerns and, where relevant, the regional representatives of the Agency, Board or Commission.

4. The purpose of the Committee review is not to replace the function of Government Departments and Ministers in making appointments. Its function is to approve or not approve the name before it, not to consider or recommend alternative names for appointments.

5. The following appointments shall not be submitted to the Human Resources Committee for review:

(a) appointments of provincial public or civil servants by virtue of their employment(i.e.The Deputy Minister of Finance is an unpaid member of the Lotteries Commission);

(b) candidates selected by an open competition and selection process or peer review (i.e. Provincial Judges selected by the Judicial Appointments Committee or employees of Agencies, Boards or Commissions);

(c) candidates recommended for appointment to self-regulatory bodies who are elected or recommended by the body (i.e. Nova Scotia Medical Society);

(d) candidates recommended for appointment to Hospitals and Universities where the candidate is recommended by the Board of Governors or Directors of the Institution.

6. The Committee may interview a recommended candidate where a majority of members support a motion to interview a particular recommended candidate.

7. The Committee shall not hear submissions oar representations form anyone not a member of the Committee.

8. Meetings of the Committee shall be open to the public unless the Committee majority vote determines to meet in camera.

9. The Committee shall meet at least once a month every month of the year irrespective of whether the House of Assembly has been prorogued.

10. The Committee shall approve or not approve recommended candidates on the basis of a simple majority.

11. The Committee shall make recommendations with respect to every name submitted by Executive council on the day it appears on the agenda unless a majority of members agree to defer a recommendation to the next meeting.

12. Recommendations of the Committee shall be accepted by the Executive Council and the Minister responsible for the appointment.

The agenda for meetings and a list of recommended candidates and Form "A" will be provided to all members one week in advance.

INTRODUCTION

The Standing Committee on Human Resources, an all-party Committee of the House of Assembly, was struck at the beginning of the First Session of the Fifty-Ninth General Assembly, pursuant to Rule 60 of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly.* The Committee's membership, during the First Session of the General Assembly, was as follows:

Mr. Ron Chisholm, MLA – Chairman
Guysborough – Sheet Harbour

Mr. Brooke Taylor, MLA
Colchester – Musquodoboit Valley

Mr. Cecil O'Donnell, MLA
Shelburne

Mr. Frank Corbett, MLA
Cape Breton Centre

Ms. Maureen MacDonald, MLA
Halifax Needhanm

Ms. Joan Massey, MLA
Dartmouth East

Mr. Russell MacKinnon, MLA
Cape Breton West

Mr. Leo Glavine, MLA
Kings West

Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA
Halifax Clayton Park

PROCEDURES AND OPERATIONS

The Human Resources Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month to consider appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions. The Committee also meets periodically to consider other matters under their mandate. These meetings are held on Tuesday mornings in the Legislative Committees Office. During the Second Session if the Fifty-Ninth General Assembly, the Human Resources Committee has met on the following dates:

October 21, 2003
November 25, 2003
December 16, 2003
January 27, 2004
February 17, 2004
February 24, 2004
March 30, 2004
April 27, 2004
May 4, 2004
May 11, 2004
May 25, 2004
June 29, 2004
July 27, 2004
August 31, 2004
September 16, 2004
September 28, 2004

AGENCIES, BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

During the first session of the Fifty-Sixth General Assembly (1993), an amendment was made to Rule 60 of the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*. This amendment increased the mandate of the Standing Committee on Human Resources. The Committee has been legislated to review potential appointments to all government Agencies, Boards and Commissions (ABC's).

THE PROCESS

There two ways in which an appointment can be made to an Agency, Board or Commission. They are as follows:

i. **Order in Council**

Order in Council appointments require both the Executive Council (Cabinet) and the Lieutenant Governor's approval.

ii **Ministerial**

These appointments are made by the Minister responsible for the legislation that establishes the Agency, Board or Commission. These appointments then are forwarded to the Executive Council (Cabinet).

The principle distinction between the two types of appointments is that the Ministerial appointments are made by the Minister responsible for the legislation that establishes the ABC. Whereas, Order in Council (OIC) appointments are recommended to the Executive Council by the Minister responsible for the legislation that established the ABC and only upon Executive Council approval are the Orders then signed by the Lieutenant Governor.

The Human Resources Committee has been legislated, since 1993, to look at both forms of appointments. The only appointments that the Committee will not consider are those excluded by Rule 60 (2) (c) (iv) 5.(a-d) of the mandate contained within the *Rules and Forms of Procedure of the House of Assembly*.

Technically, there is no difference between an Agency, Board or Commission insofar as the name is concerned. They are called one or the other depending on how it is referred to in the legislation. It is the legislation that determines the role, mandate, authority and jurisdiction of the ABC, not the name.

NUMBER OF AGENCIES, BOARD AND COMMISSIONS

Currently there are 245 Agencies, Boards and Commissions. There are approximately 1100 people appointed to ABC's at any particular time. In accordance with the objectives of the government to reduce the number of agencies, boards and commissions there has been a significant reduction related to inactive or unnecessary agencies, boards and commissions.

REMUNERATION

There is no set formula for remuneration for the people serving on Agencies, Boards and Commissions. P&P (now called Treasury and Policy Board) determined that it would be up to each individual Department / Minister to review and set the remuneration for the individual boards. Remumeration for a number of Agencies, Boards and Commissions are currently under review.

Remuneration can vary from boards such as the Utility and Review Board which pays $70,000 per annum to boards such as the Regional Health Boards which compensate for expenses only.

BULK ADVERTISEMENT

Once every six months a list of upcoming vacancies for all government Agencies, Boards and Commissions is generated. These vacancies must be advertised through Communications Nova Scotia in the Chronicle Herald, Daily News and the Cape Breton Post as per the Standing Committee on Human Resources' advertising policy (July 23, 1998). The Standing Committee on Human Resources' Clerk organizes the bulk advertisement. Departments can still place ads for individual ABC's when required. The Standing Committee on Human Resources needs to be informed of supplementary ads prior to placement to ensure that the advertising policy is being followed.

All applications from the bulk ad are received by the Executive Council Office then forwarded to the individual departments.

DEPARTMENT SCREENING PANELS

Once the individual applications are forwarded to the Department, the screening panels are consulted. All appointments, even those people being reappointed to a board, must go through the screening panel process. Screening panels are appointed by the individual ministers to screen all applicants to ABC's to ensure that all candidates are chosen in a fair and equitable manner.

The screening panels are to be made up of volunteers from the community. The members of the screening panels need to have technical expertise, they should represent the stakeholders of those particular ABC's which they oversee and there should be some regional representation within the panel where appropriate.

The mandate of the Screening Panels, as established by the Executive Council's Office, is as follows:

> ***Screening Panels***
>
> *Screening panels were established as a matter of discretion. The purpose of screening panels was to establish a mechanism to determine qualified candidates for appointment to ABC's, to assist ministers in the selection of candidates to fill vacancies on ABC's.*
>
> *Screening panel members are selected by ministers on the basis of experience in the area of concern of the department, having regard for expertise, regional representation, gender, racial and other affirmative action considerations. Departmental staff assist the minister in recruiting screening panel members, having regard to the experience in the area of concern of the department, having regard to expertise, regional representation, gender, racial and other affirmative action considerations.*

Once the screening panel has approved a candidate, their application is forwarded to the Minister. The Minister is then able to select candidates from this pool of applications. The signed paperwork is then forwarded to the Clerk of the Executive Council. The applications are sent to the Treasury and Policy Board and the Cabinet prior to being sent to the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

Once Cabinet approval is obtained, those applications that the Human Resources Committee is mandated to approve or not approve are then sent to the Legislative Committees Office and placed on the Standing Committee on Human Resources' agenda.

The material is received no later than the Friday, eleven calendar days, prior to the scheduled Human Resources Committee meeting. The material is copied and distributed to all Committee members on the Tuesday, one week in advance of the meeting, as dictated by the *Province of Nova Scotia Rules and Forms of Procedures of the House of Assembly*.

If subsequent material arrives from the Executive Council Office after the one week deadline has occurred, it can still be distributed to the Committee members, but before it can be considered at the scheduled meeting, a waiver of notice must be signed and given to the Human Resource Committee Clerk. The signing of the waiver must be unanimous. If there is one Committee member who objects to the items being added to the agenda, the items will be tabled and placed on the agenda for the next meeting. The same procedure holds true if for some reason the Human Resources Committee's policies and/or procedures are not adhered to (i.e. ABC not advertised).

If the appointments are **approved**, the material is returned to the Executive Council Office and placed on the order paper for the Lieutenant Governor's signature.

If the appointments are **not approved**, the material is also returned to the Executive Council Office, whereupon it will be returned to the appropriate department with a letter from the Clerk explaining the circumstances surrounding the rejection.

Contained within appendix A is the list of all the Appointments to Agencies, Boards and Commissions that have been approved, not approved, stood or withdrawn from consideration by the Standing Committee on Human Resources from October 21, 2003 up until September 28, 2004.

In accordance with the mandate of the Standing Committee on Human Resources the committee has looked at various topics of concerns related to education and labour. The following summary outlines the various issues and concerns that representatives of these areas brought before the Standing Committee.

NOVA SCOTIA COMMUNITY COLLEGES

January 27, 2004

WITNESSES

Department of Education
Mr. Dennis Cochrane - Deputy Minister

Nova Scotia Community College
Mr. Ray Ivany - President
Mr. Colin MacLean - Director of Organizational Development

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Education

The Community College Act, passed in 1996, transformed the community college from a government department to a board-governed institution. Some of the processes that were put in place as a result of the Community College Act are: the Minister of Education approves new programs of study, the admissions policy, the tuition policy, and the schedule and tables an annual report for the Nova Scotia Community College before the House of Assembly.

The Nova Scotia Community College is required by legislation to provide an operational and organizational review every five years. Finally, the Minister may make payments to the college through appropriations by the Legislature. The operating grant of the Nova Scotia Community College was originally $53 million but this was increased over the years to currently stand at $70 million. Other sources of funding are provided through tuition (13%), public support (60%), fee for service; i.e., customized training and applied research components.

The government has supported the Nova Scotia Community College through a number of other changes including, in 2000, replacing the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education with the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities whose mandate is to give advice to the Minister with regard to colleges, universities and student financial aid.

The Nova Scotia Community College

In 1999, the college established its first strategic plan, with a mission of "building Nova Scotia's economy and quality of life through education and innovation". Back in 1996, NSCC's enrollment was about 6,600 students and the graduate employment rate was at 73%. The first undertaking that the college initiated was a program renewal process to enable development of courses to take advantage of emerging areas in the economy and have programs available to ensure that Nova Scotians will have the skills when these new opportunities open up.

A major move was to introduce two-year diploma programs. Nova Scotia Community College has developed 17 new two-year programs and carried out 65 program suspensions. This has been done in partnership with labour market development data from the Province of Nova Scotia as well as program advisory committees made up of industry and employers in each of the program areas.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Although there were a number of issues discussed throughout the meeting, outlined below are the key issues that were discussed.

Partnership between the Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Community College

— The Department of Education has a strong relationship and a number of partnerships with the Nova Scotia Community College. Many adult learning programs through the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning are provided by the community college; services for disabled students via rehabilitation services; and many initiatives in the Skills and Learning Branch are also intricately involved with the Nova Scotia Community College to advance the provincial labour market strategy. Levels III and IV of adult literacy are provided throughout the province by the Community College as well as apprentice and training programs.

— There is a good relationship between the Department of Education and the Nova Scotia Community College with significant progress made, but with much left to be done. The growth plan for the community college is a major step forward, not just for the community college but also in meeting the educational needs of Nova Scotians, and providing the ability to meet some of those labour market demands that will be evident in the future years.

Government Investment

— In March 2003, the provincial government made a landmark investment in the Nova Scotia Community College by announcing a $123 million capital program – multi-year plan, to further the vision of creating a national calibre college for Nova Scotians. Of this amount, $38 million is being used for capital renovation in rural areas of the province, $56 million for the current phase of capital development in Metro Halifax, and a $29 million investment for further development in Metro in future years. Operating costs will escalate in 2004-05, as a result of the development initiative. The increase will start at a proposed $1.1 million up to a total of $10. 9 by the year 2009-10.

In making this investment the government recognized the imbalance that exists in the province between seats at the university level and seats at the community college level. The capital initiative, along with its associated operating costs, will add 2,500 seats to the capacity of the community college system.

Employment Goals

— The government views the college as the main vehicle for providing relevant training that meets current and future labour market demands. There is a concern that post-secondary education at the college level be affordable and support the needs of diverse students.

Results of a recent survey showed that of the 4,322 Nova Scotia Community College graduates in 2001, the employment rate of the graduates in their field, was 88 percent with an average wage of $23,044.

Programs and Services

— In 2004, enrollment was up to 8,463, a 21 per cent increase since 1996. There has been a significant change in the way programs are organized in academic schools. NSCC created a school of business, health and human services, applied arts and new media, and trades and technology to focus on the quality of its programming. Employment rates are up since 1996 by 15 to 88 percent and 95 percent of the graduates are still living and working in Nova Scotia.

— NSCC has a business development unit that is specifically charged with making sure that the college has connections with individual industries and the industry sector. They have also initiated the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning, which is funded jointly with the province and the federal government. There have been challenges in terms of access to the college, particularly for those individuals who have some literacy needs and needs in completing secondary school level credentials. NSCC has increased their capacity significantly in that regard over the past two to three years. At last count there were between 1,300 and 1,400 students studying in the School for Adult Learning.

— The College prep course is the college's primary partnership with the public school system. NSCC has a signed memoranda of understanding with the school boards. The main focus of this program is to have young Nova Scotians see a viable end point in high school for the different occupations in which the College prepares people.

— The applied research area is an important program on the economic development side because the role colleges play in Research and Development is at the commercialization stage. The more practical, hands-on model that characterized the college's academic program also extends to its approaches around applied research. The area that has been most active is their Centre of Geographic Sciences in Lawrencetown, which has had a long internationally known research capacity.

— Disability services is an area where NSCC has had a significant increase in the number of students. Currently, there are approximately 530 disabled students enrolled within the Nova Scotia Community College system.

— The fiscal stewardship of the college is another impressive highlight. The college has had balanced budgets since it came into existence in 1996 and has had unqualified audit statements. NSCC's Board of Governors has a nationally-recognized governance model that has drawn interest from elsewhere in the country.

— Another highlight has been the link with the Regional Development Authority. One of the things that has resulted from NSCC's partnership with the Department of Education has been a greater connectivity with other government departments. Lastly is NSCC's development project. This is a real opportunity for the college since it includes improvements to all of its campuses, with some significant projects underway for Kingstec, Pictou, Truro and the Strait area and the metro campus at the Nova Scotia Hospital property which is still in the design phase.

DOCUMENTATION

No documentation was requested by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, however the Department of Education did provide the committee with the following information:

1. What percentage of university students remain in Nova Scotia after graduation ?

According to a survey by the Maritimes Provinces Higher Education Commission released in 2003, 73% of graduates from 1999 remained in Nova Scotia two years after graduation.

2. What is the level of indebtedness of community college students upon graduation?

A recent survey by the Millennium Scholarship Foundation compared NSCC to 26 national colleges in 2002. A poll of 452 students found that 68% with education-related debt reported a level between $5,000 - $30,000 and a further 3% reported a debt above $30,000. All 26 colleges combined reported that 50% of the polled groups (n=9,834) had no accumulated education-related debt.

Data from Nova Scotia Student Assistance states that the average total debt for a two-year community college program is $11,863. It is important to note that this debt level is for students having had two full years of college study whereas the Millennium Study included students in their 1st, 2nd and 3rd years of study - and 65% had less than one full year of college studies completed, suggesting that these students acquired debt from previous post-secondary studies prior to attending a community college.

References to the meeting can be found on the following website:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/hr/hr_2004jan27.htm

WORKERS COMPENSATION BOARD

February 17, 2004

WITNESSES

Workers Compensation Board
Mr. Louis Comeau - Chairman, Board of Directors
Ms. Nancy MacCready-Williams - Vice President, Client Services
Mr. Stuart MacLean - Acting Chief Executive Officer
Mr. Jim Houston - Vice President, Strategic Services
Ms. Shelly Rowan - Acting Vice President, Prevention & Assessment Services
Mr. Leo McKenna - Vice President, Finance and CFO

INTRODUCTION

The Workers Compensation Board needed to develop a new working model for the compensation system, a new culture that involved consultation with stakeholders and a new focus on safety and prevention. WCB was asked to lead a consultation process with stakeholders to develop a strategic plan for the system which includes the OH&S, WAP and WCAT, and to make recommendations on benefit and coverage changes arising from the Dorsey report.

The Dorsey report put forward 41 recommendations for improvements, including $250 million of additional benefits. From the beginning, the board said that the WCB agreed that the Dorsey recommendations, including the benefit enhancements, should be implemented over time.

Since then, WCB and their partner agencies, Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal (WCAT) Workers Advisers Program (WAP) and Occupational Health and Safety Division (OH&S) have been working with the stakeholders to try to achieve a consensus on the priorities for the system. As heard in their consultations, stakeholders have a different view on what needs to be done.

The Workers Compensation Board completed its strategic plan and made recommendations to the government. Thereafter, the Supreme Court decision on chronic pain was announced. In response to the Supreme Court decision and the Workers Compensation Board recommendations to the Dorsey report, the government introduced Bill No. 20 entitled "An Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994, The Workers Compensation Act, and Chapter 7 of the Acts of 1996, The Occupational Health and Safety Act". Again, WCB were asked to make recommendations to government on a new approach to chronic pain.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Although there were a number of issues discussed throughout the meeting, outlined below are the key issues that were discussed.

Performance Consultations

Through various public hearings many workers voiced experiences they had with WCB over many years and how they had been mistreated. WCB understands their issues and agrees that sometimes the service provided has not been all that great, but it has taken many positive steps throughout the last few years to focus on these things.

Over the past 10 years, WCB has accepted about 350,000 claims and paid over $1 billion in benefits to workers or health care providers on their (workers) behalf. During that time, WCB's financial situation has also improved. Today, the WCB is 73 per cent funded, compared to 27 per cent in 1994. There has been a lot of progress because the average assessment rate has stayed stable at $2.54 per $100 of payroll during that 10-year period. WCB stated it is hard to maintain the rate and to improve the unfunded liability without affecting in some way new benefits that could be introduced

WCB has made some significant service improvements as well. An important indicator is the result of employers and injured workers satisfaction surveys. The 2003 survey results show that three-quarters of injured workers were satisfied with their overall experience with WCB; that is up from 58 per cent in 1997. Ninety-three per cent of injured workers and 85 per cent of employers said that WCB treat people with respect and deal with them fairly. Eighty-seven per cent of injured workers said that the WCB treats them well and about 70 per cent of employers said that it was affordable.

Over the past year the system has undergone extensive review. Independent reviewers have provided WCB with a good understanding of how the system is operating. The Auditor General was quoted as saying our review of the WCB claims indicates that overall, claims are being processed efficiently and in accordance with the Act The Dorsey committee found that WCB is generally doing a good job, particularly in the areas of classifying, assessing employers and performance measures and accountability. But improvements are needed as well. The Dorsey committee and WCB both recognize that the workers compensation program is . . . overly complex, highly technical, excessively legal, rigidly compartmentalized and poorly coordinated

Workers Compensation Act

The Act sets out a very date-driven benefit scheme that is difficult to understand. The Legislature considered this in 1994 & 1995 when it debated moving to an earnings-loss system. The Select Committee on Workers Compensation and the Dorsey committee also heard similar complaints about date-driven benefits from injured workers. Unfortunately no easy solution to this problem has been identified and WCB will continue to grapple with this situation. WCB has taken steps to make the system less complex in other areas; they have introduced the Assessment Payment Plan and all of their payroll reporting rules are now harmonized with the Canada Revenue Agency.

Bill 20 contains a number of other changes that WCB recommends to further reduce complexity on the assessment side of the business. Eliminating the lengthy inclusion list from the Act and replacing it with a shorter, clearer list of excluded industries so employers can more easily determine whether they are required to have workers compensation or not. Eliminating the three-worker rule and the counting discrepancy between sole proprietors, partners and active directors. The Dorsey report also mentioned that the appeals system is too legalistic; WCB agrees. In partnership with stakeholders and other agencies, WCB has identified a number of initiatives in the strategic plan that they will undertake over the next five years to simplify the system. They have established a joint working group to identify and implement new ways of resolving the claims-related issues earlier and make them less formal.

WCB Strategic Plan

Regarding prevention, stakeholders have identified other key priorities for the system in that the social and economic costs associated with workplace injuries need greater focus in society. The strategic plan reflects the compelling case made by workers, employers and safety representatives for the creation of a system-wide prevention program.

In 2004, WCB's total budget was $260 million of which they intend to spend $3.6 million on changing the safety culture in this province and put in place specific programs to help reduce workplace injuries. WCB will also undertake to initiate a social marketing campaign to raise safety awareness, investigate proactive rate incentives to promote positive safety behaviours, investigate disincentives for employers, including auditing programs, build a program to allow employers to access information, including accident information on-line and look at developing a core safety training curriculum that includes education for young workers.

Recommendations from WCB's Building the Future report include:

Increasing the indexing of benefits to 55 percent. The Dorsey report recommends a much higher percentage; however, WCB intends to reach that level on a gradual basis as they develop and make more funds available.

Increasing the maximum assessable/insurable earnings, and repeal the three-worker rule. Prior to all of this, WCB had made recommendations to enhance, by $20 million, the supplementary benefits program for employees, principally, workers injured prior to 1990.

The Supreme Court of Canada's chronic pain decision was rendered shortly after WCB made their recommendations. Some stakeholders expressed the view that the Dorsey report should be reconsidered in light of the financial implications of chronic pain. What WCB put together is basically revenue neutral. It does not think that it should put those issues aside, but does think all of these things have to go forward in some way or another.

Regarding governance, the Workers Compensation Board of Directors is responsible for the governance of the Board. It oversees the delivery of programs, develops policies in accordance with the Act and develops legislative proposals for government to consider. It also has a Chief Executive Officer who is responsible for overseeing the management of the operations. The Board of Directors will focus on governance issues and not management of WCB. Currently, WCB has a stakeholder board made up of employers, labour and public-at-large representatives. The board has finalized a governance manual and also set up an Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Council to advise on prevention policies and programs.

Chronic Pain

In October 2003 the Supreme Court of Canada found that Section 10B of the Workers Compensation Act and the Functional Restoration Program regulations are unconstitutional. The question before the court was whether injured workers should be considered for long-term compensation for chronic pain. The court provided two key messages; first, injured workers with chronic pain must have access, the same access, to the workers compensation system as other injured workers; second an individual assessment should be conducted to determine the appropriate benefits and services each worker should receive, and to determine their eligibility for long-term compensation.

In mid-October, the government tabled Bill 20 "An Act to Amend Chapter 10 of the Acts of 1994, The Workers Compensation Act, and Chapter 7 of the Acts of 1996, The Occupational Health and Safety Act" in response to the Supreme Court decision as well as in response to the Dorsey report. The Minister of Environment and Labour asked the Board of Directors at WCB to make a recommendation for a new framework for compensation in relation to chronic pain for the government consideration.

Throughout the public consultation process, stakeholders were asked what are the alternatives for this high-level framework for chronic pain; do they prefer a legislative framework, a regulatory framework, a policy framework or some combination of all three? They were asked for their opinion on the options that were presented in the discussion paper (WCB) for an assessment tool for chronic pain and whether there was a particular option that they could not possibly support and why they felt that? Stakeholders were also asked if there were any options for responding to the Supreme Court of Canada decision that WCB has not thought of, and if so, could they describe those?

"Throughout the extensive consultation process, WCB received very insightful information on stakeholders views on the chronic pain issue. Generally there is a sense that Section 10B and the Functional Restoration Program regulations should be repealed and struck down as discriminatory. Stakeholders agreed that there likely should be a high-level framework for compensation for chronic pain reflected in the legislation. There was some division of opinion about whether the specific program rules should be captured in regulation or in policies by the Board of Directors."

All stakeholders agreed that the cost of the benefit program for chronic pain should not be the primary factor in determining what is the most appropriate approach for moving forward. Some employers expressed concern about the cost of providing chronic pain benefits and the impact that a significant rate increase could have on the economy of Nova Scotia. Injured workers groups said they preferred the Marked Life Disruption Assessment tool. Some employers felt ill-equipped to provide a comment on the appropriate tool to use and they felt the question was better answered by the Workers Compensation Board and the medical community.

In terms of the cost of moving forward, the Worker Compensation Board has limited experience on which to base it estimates for the cost of providing long-term benefits for chronic pain. In consultation with an independent actuary, the Workers Compensation Board estimates that providing chronic pain benefits will result in a $220 million to $350 million increase to their benefits liability as well as an approximate $11 million increase in annual claim costs. The Workers Compensation Board intends to consider the question of funding chronic pain benefits over time as actual costs become known.

WCB has also researched how other Canadian jurisdictions compensate for chronic pain and has sought advice from an internationally recognized chronic pain expert. The Board of Directors is finalizing its recommendation and it should be ready to go to government shortly.

In implementing long term compensation for chronic pain, these injured workers must have access to WCB claims as do other injured workers. The board has considered that 10E cases are high risk cases and will be considered for chronic pain compensation. It was not considered by the Supreme Court of Canada, because an injured worker with an injury date between 1990 and 1996 was not the subject of an appeal. The Supreme Court did not consider the constitutionality of 10E, but WCB has looked at the decision and believes that these workers are at risk. The funding estimates given presume that workers injured in the window period, including the Section 10E population and those who did not satisfy the criteria of 10E would be considered for chronic pain. WCB has not made any decision on chronic pain since the Supreme Court decision, but will be doing so once the new legislation is in place.

Section 10E has provided a permanent 50 per cent earnings loss to certain injured workers who satisfied the criteria set out in the legislation. It was retroactive for a period between 1990 and 1996. As of that date, the Functional Restoration Program (FRP) regulations put in place by the government in 1996 continued to be law and required the board to terminate benefits four weeks post-diagnosis of chronic pain. If the decision that chronic pain is compensable goes forward, it is going to cost an estimated additional $11 million in extra claim costs, in addition to the $200 to $350 million on the benefits liability because this money is retroactive to 1985 which is the effective date of Section 15 of the charter and retroactively adjudicating chronic pain compensation.

Three Worker Rule

Elimination of the three-worker rule would ensure that all workers in industries where workers compensation coverage is mandatory would be covered in case of a workplace accident. However, implementing universality would mean protection for workers who are employed in businesses or industries not currently required to provide workers compensation coverage.

Conflicting Medical Evidence

Adjudication of a workers compensation claim is not easy. There is often conflicting evidence. The employers are entitled to send an injured worker to a doctor of their choosing. An injured worker will seek medical advice from their own family physicians and/or perhaps medical specialists.

An adjudicator or case manager job is challenging because of this conflicting evidence and competing opinions on the same issue. It is the caseworker's duty to consider all of the evidence in its entirety and make a determination in accordance with policies and legislation. There is a process in place, an appeal system, to help adjudicate the caseworkers' decision when opposed by the injured worker(s).

Poll Survey

Of the 1,508 injured workers who have received service from WCB in 2003, the survey showed that 87 per cent felt they were treated fairly. Generally, 84 or 85 per cent of injured workers are back to work in less than one month. Approximately 7 to 8 per cent are back to work within a three to four month period. About 4 per cent of the total injured worker population, who are unable to return to work as a result of serious work-related injuries, go on to be serviced by the Extended Benefits Unit.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was requested by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, and furnished by the Workers Compensation Board.

3. The 2003 Employers Survey.

4. The 2003 Injured Worker Survey.

References to the meeting can be found on the following website:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/hr/hr_2004feb17.htm

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

April 27, 2004

WITNESSES

Public Service Commission
Mr. Richard Nurse - Commissioner
Ms. Patti Pike - Executive Director, Strategic HR Management
Mr. Gordon Adams - Executive Director, Planning and Coordination
Ms. Katharine Cox-Brown - Director, Evaluation and Audit
Ms. Heather Chandler - Diversity Consultant
Ms. Cheryl Burgess - Director, HR Innovation and Growth
Ms. Jane Allt - Director , HR Support Services

INTRODUCTION

The vision of the Public Service Commission is to provide leadership and excellence in human resource management. The Public Service Commission was created in June 2001 through an amendment to the appropriate legislation. The Commission has the responsibility for development of overall human resource policies, programs and procedures; setting standards and also being aware of the practices that are used within the Civil Service; consultation, advice and assistance to departments in coordination with their human resource or personnel activities; manpower and succession planning; staff development and training, continuous learning; classification and benefits; recruitment and advising on collective bargaining for various groups, as well as workplace safety and wellness.

PSC's plan for 2004 is to deliver on the promise of restructuring. With this in mind, PSC has developed four goals to achieve: focus on service excellence, focus on developing a dynamic, sustainable and committed Public Service, promote a supportive, safe and healthy workplace and ensuring that practices, policies and procedures are applied consistently.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Although there were a number of issues discussed throughout the meeting, outlined below are the key issues that were discussed.

Human Resource Categories

Age

From an age distribution point of view, the Nova Scotia Civil Service (made up of approximately 7,200 people) comprised of three age groups. In the under-30 age group there are many more people in the Nova Scotia workforce than there are in the Nova Scotia Civil Service. The government has a large number of people in the over-40 work group that make up about 73 per cent; then there is the over-60 work group in which there is a significant drop in personnel.

Some contributing factors that support the shape of the age profile shows that in the 1990s there were job freezes and efforts to reduce the size of the workforce with early retirement and other initiatives.

Age and Gender

From a gender point of view, women in the workforce make up 57.9 per cent, while men make up 42.1 per cent. The difference in the Nova Scotia Civil Service compared to the general population of the workforce is that in the general workforce the ratio is closer. The significant group of women and men moving through the 40 to 49 age population in the Civil Service is 42.1 percent in that age group compared to 20.7 per cent for the general workforce.

Challenges

One of the key challenges facing the Civil Service in the next four to five years are the number of Civil Service members who are, and will be retirement-eligible. The pattern of retirement in the last couple of years has been 137 at the end of 2002 and 176 at the end of 2003-04. Projections are that there will be about 250 - 300 retiring at the end of 2004-05. A total eligible over that time frame is more than 2,000 people and taking into account that retirement is less than 50 per cent of the reason that people leave the workforce, that number could, potentially double.

Diversity

PSC policy objective is to ensure that the Nova Scotia Civil Service is reflective of the community. They have created policy, education programs, reduced barriers and encouraged equity and diversity in the workplace, however the progress has been slow and there is much more work to be done.

The four designated groups are: Aboriginals, Black Nova Scotians, racially visible and disabled; statistics are based on a self-identifying process. The statistics for Black Nova Scotians is shown to be reflective of that population. The PSC diversity policy anticipates that government be reflective of the population across and throughout the organization, therefore there needs to be additional analysis. It is recognized that this group may be underemployed in the Civil Service; therefore, there is the need to understand where that group is scattered through the various levels. For the other three groups it is understood that statistically they (PSC) are approximately halfway to being reflective of the community.

Of the affirmative action plan required by each agency, board, commission and/or department, no formal reporting has been done. The government has had some form of an affirmative action policy since 1975. However, since 2001 some departments have implemented education and training programs. Currently, diversity management and self-identifying surveys have been or will be implemented.

Succession Management

Nine per cent of the workforce represent designated groups, but there is still more work to be done. There is a diversity management program which includes employee systems review where departments look at the potential for systemic bias and lower those barriers to make the workplace more welcoming and supportive.

Human Resource Strategy - Preferred Employer

The Career Starts Program is made up of four components: Cooperative Employment Program, Summer Diversity Program, Female Mentorship Program and a Post Secondary Internship Program. The Co-op Employment Program, Summer Diversity and Female Mentorship offer summer employment programs for 10 to 12 students with an interest in public service. The Post Secondary Internship offers a one-year work experience. In the past five years, the government has had 68 graduates from that program, 25 of whom are still employed in the provincial government. That is 34 per cent on a permanent, casual or term basis.

Career Connect Initiative is a program in which PSC trains and prepares lead public servants with an interest in speaking to the public and to students about the Public Service. The Executive Recruitment Capability initiative is one in which PSC will be directly involved in many future senior staff searches and in the coordination of an in-bringing of consistency and some expertise to that activity. Finally there is the Planning for Progress initiative where departmental staff build relationships with post-secondary institutions, create bursary programs and give lectures to students in their fields of education.

Reward and Recognition

An example of this is within the Department of Community Services which just launched a pilot project in recognition of good performance.

Learning

Leadership Development and Calendar Training Program

The Public Service Commission offers four different leadership development initiatives, they also offer after needs analysis and reflection programs and change management in administrative support and computer training. In addition they offer a mandatory course in diversity management. About 7,500 employees have taken the diversity program since 1997 and of that group 1,000 have actually gone through the program since 2002. PSC also has a Performance Management Program that seeks to link departmental goals and the individual efforts of personnel throughout the Public Service. For example, at Tourism, Culture and Heritage, there is a specific HR strategy in which there is a concerted effort to reassign funding to HR strategies and to provide dedicated funding to the development of staff within that department.

Leadership Continuity

In recent years 75 staff have acquired their Masters in Public Administration through this initiative. Nine employees are receiving development assessments in a very structured program and currently 30 managers signed up for a federally supported initiative to learn competencies and to be prepared for future jobs in the Public Service.

Workplace Wellness

PSC reported a review of its own efforts in the area of occupational health and safety and agreed to take action on the 19 recommendations which were done in 2003 and will continue to be done in 2004.

PSC has introduced an Occupational Health and Safety Audit Program to encourage departments to comply with the legislation. They are taking steps to move their focus from safety to the broader theme of wellness in the workplace. There is also an Employee Assistance Program, of which in the past year about 850 employees have taken advantage and in which over the past five years, there has been a small growth in the amount of people utilizing the program.

Worklife

PSC is in the process of completing the analysis stage of an employee survey to which 53 per cent of government employees responded. This will be a baseline that will inform PSC planning and form activities in the future.

Advertising

People from various backgrounds, African-Nova Scotians, people with disabilities, and so on, are not applying to publicly advertised agency, board or commission vacancies. The government, in the recent past, reviewed its approach to appointments to ABCs. This review showed that the current model is the best practice in the country.

However, there needs to be a way of reaching out to the designated groups more directly. PSC will be encouraging initiatives that will bring the message more directly to those diverse groups beyond the ads. It is not just getting the applications on file, it is reaching out to those persons and making applying easier; getting the message out of the availability of those volunteer opportunities and service. The ads in the papers are not enough for isolated marginalized communities. It has to be taken out to the community via public forums and other means.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was requested by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, but had not yet been furnished by the Public Service Commission of Nova Scotia.

5. The number of persons employed in management positions in the civil service and the percentage of female vs male with a breakdown of managerial positions relating to female vs male within each provincial department.
6. Pay scale of the public service as compared with the private sector.
7. A numerical breakdown from 1999 to 2004 of the career starts programs of university graduates.
8. Statistical information regarding affirmative action policies of other Canadian jurisdictions.
9. The number of employees who work on contract, short term or part time for the government with a breakdown of those employees by age and gender.
10. Historical data depicting the absenteeism rates within government.
11. A copy of the costing for the Human Resources Employee Survey.

References to the meeting can be found on the following website:
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/hr/hr_2004apr27.htm

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

May 4, 2004

WITNESSES

Halifax Regional School Board
Ms. Carolyn McFarlane - Chairman
Ms. Carole Olsen - Superintendent
Mr. Richard Morris - Executive Director, Finance
Ms. Bernadette Hamilton - Vice Chairman
Mr. Don Buck - Senior Staff Advisor

INTRODUCTION

The Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) is pleased that the Department of Education has undertaken to review the funding formula for school boards. They believe this review is long overdue and are confident the outcome will be an open, transparent and equitable funding formula that is understandable to everyone.

The school board understands that equity does not necessarily mean equal because all schools and all school boards are not the same, there are differences among boards right across the province that need to be recognized in a clearly defined manner. Equity means that each child in Nova Scotia is provided with an equal opportunity to achieve the learning outcomes of the public school program. Providing an equal opportunity can require different levels of resources for each child.

There must be a clear link between the resources required to provide the public school program and the manner in which the Department of Education provides funding to school boards for this purpose.

The Halifax Regional School Board has put in place a business plan. The board has adopted six goals within its business plan, of which one of the first is to improve student achievement.

As part of their accountability measures and support to schools for improving student achievement and to provide baseline data for improving student achievement, the Board undertook a survey of every parent, teacher and student within the school system to find out where they needed to improve.

They have undertaken a detailed description of their communities using Statistics Canada data and given that information back to the schools. HRSB has a planning for improvement exercise in place that will help the schools and the teachers use that data to improve student achievement.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Although there were a number of issues discussed throughout the meeting, outlined below are the key issues that were discussed.

Funding

Government funding to create and maintain a quality public education system is vital to meeting the needs of diverse school communities in achieving these policy outcomes. The provincial government will be providing over $753.5 million in grants to school boards in 2004-05. These funds will be distributed provincially in a fair, open and accountable manner. Quite a few years ago, the government adopted a set of principles for public education funding in this province. These key principles are equity, accountability and adequacy.

Of the resources that all students need within this province for education, it is the people who make a quality education system. There are also other factors within education communities that must be considered when assessing resources; although these factors will vary across the boards throughout the province. For example: small, rural schools require additional resources to provide the same opportunities as large schools; and extensive resources and supports are required for high needs special education students. Some boards have more students in this category than others and each board does not have the same number of students requiring ESL support, as well as students living in poverty or inner-city environments. For special needs children the resources are spread more widely to accommodate all of these children.

Each school board has unique characteristics and students populations that require different levels of resources to provide that equal educational opportunity. The challenge is to address each of these factors in a funding formula so that the distribution of provincial funding is open, transparent and accountable. The per-student funding to each board will be different, but equitable.

Essential Programs Resources

There is no clear link between the resources necessary for school boards to provide the public school program and the manner in which the Department of Education provides funding to the school boards for this purpose. In terms of an accountability framework, the department should be able to have a funding formula that is open, transparent and accountable with respect to how the funding is built up for the boards. Then in terms of the shared responsibility, school boards need to be able to reflect back to the Legislature, to the department and to the public how they are allocating those dollars that are provided in the same manner.

Funding Formulas

Many other provinces have detailed funding models that link the resources necessary for school boards to provide mandated programs to the funding formulas that distribute the funding to the boards. For example: the Manitoba funding document clearly outlines the funding provided under the resource categories; many other provinces are similar to Manitoba and these funding formula arrangements allow equity and adequacy to be assessed in an accountability framework.

In Nova Scotia, for the past five years, the majority of the funding has been distributed in a category called baseline funding which is a block amount of money that accounts for 72.7 per cent of all the money that is distributed to school boards. The other main category is called formula funding and is based on formulas that were developed in 1999 and that are based on several categories and student enrollments.

Of the 56,000 students who attend school each day, the Halifax Regional School Board transports about 22,000 students to and from school on 220 buses and 1,000 receive free metro bus passes to attend. These are students who qualify under the Education Act for transportation. Student enrollment is declining at a rate of one percent, while cost drivers (maintenance, transportation, etc.) are increasing at a rate of 3.5 per cent.

There is no formula that recognizes and/or funds this basic requirement of the education system. The absence of clear links between the resource requirements and the manner in which the funding is provided means that questions about equity, accountability and adequacy are unanswerable.

In summary, the Halifax Regional School Board is delighted the Province of Nova Scotia has announced the review of the funding formula and believe that the Province of Nova Scotia needs to review the current funding arrangements with a view to developing and implementing a formula that addresses equity, adequacy and accountability. They also believe an open, transparent, equitable formula will meet the educational needs of all students and provide assurance to the Legislature that the funds it provides are spent equitably.

They are also pleased that the former Deputy Minister of Finance, Mr. Bill Hogg, has been engaged to lead a formula review process for the province and have confidence that Mr. Hogg will be successful in addressing the issues of the education funding formula and they look forward to working with Mr. Hogg as he undertakes this essential task. HRSB also hopes that during the review, Mr. Hogg will have the opportunity to speak with various partners in education, as well as parents and students from across the province to get their input.

The HRSB is funded $20.8 million in supplementary funding from HRM. The current budget, which will not be made available until the end of May 2004, may be cut by 10 percent. If this funding is cut the school board will be faced with having to make cuts to programs, classroom teachers, library services, etc.

The province has allotted $1 million to the seven provincial school boards for maintenance. Of that amount, HRSB receives $380,000. The current supplementary funding from the Halifax Regional Municipality does help support the $22 million worth of programs across HRM.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was requested by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, and furnished by the Halifax Regional School Board.

12. A copy of the Halifax Regional School Board Business Plans for the General Fund and for the Supplementary Fund for 2004-2005.
13. Report 03-09-655 Follow-up Status Report - Auditor General Report - 2001.
14. Information on the per square foot area for students required by Fire Marshal Regulations.
15. Information on the Breakfast Program.
16. A copy of the Halifax Regional School Board Policy F001 - Use of Board Facilities.
17. An analysis of the costs for making Halifax Regional School Board schools available for community use.
18. A copy of the Special Education Report.
19. Information on Safe School initiatives relating to violence and drugs taken from the Superintendent Annual Report for 2003-2004.
20. A comparison of per pupil funding in Nova Scotia and in other parts of Canada.

References to the meeting can be found on the following website.
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/hr/hr_2004may04.htm

NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARD ASSOCIATION

May 11, 2004

WITNESSES

Nova Scotia School Board Association
Ms. Mary Jess MacDonald - President
Mr. Frank Barteaux - Executive Director
Ms. Sharon Findlay-MacPhee - Communications Manager

INTRODUCTION

The Nova Scotia School Board Association (NSSBA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to quality in public education. Their mission is to promote excellence in public education for students by providing services to their member school boards.

The association represents Nova Scotia's eight school boards, which serve approximately 152,000 students, and is funded by its member boards. The Association promotes its goals through advocacy, partnerships, board member educational opportunities and centrally coordinated cost-saving programs such as employee pension plan, the employee benefits plan and bulk purchasing. The member school boards have a voice in deciding how the association will represent their views to the public, various levels of government, education partners and other groups.

NSSBA role in improving educational standards is that it has implemented a business plan in this regard and is working at the school level with advisory councils doing on-going assessments within the classroom and provincial level.

MATTERS OF DISCUSSION

Although there were a number of issues discussed throughout the meeting, outlined below are the key issues that were discussed.

Funding

Education funding is a critical issue for school boards; a province that provides a quality education to its young people has a far better chance of experiencing future economic prosperity. The Association is strongly aware that the issue of education funding is also a high priority to Nova Scotians.

In January 2004, the NSSBA released an education position paper based on feedback received across the province at a series of community forums. The public and the education partners said that public education funding was not adequate. To summarize conclusion no. 1 of the position paper: to ensure quality education, funding must be increased based on programs and services delivery. This model must ensure equity throughout the province.

The NSSBA is pleased the government has recognized the importance of reviewing the funding formula. They also state that in doing a review it is important to look at what is currently in place to see what works and what does not.

The current level of funding in education for the province shows that with the decline in enrollment, which in the present formula is linked somewhat to the funding, there are major challenges that present themselves. A review of the funding is going to be very helpful in determining what would be adequacy for funding.

There is a strong opinion from the member boards with respect to the current formula and the kinds of weaknesses with the current distribution of the funding. It is hoped that with a new experience and a new opportunity to come up with a detailed formula that will spell out exactly what the needs are for Nova Scotian schools, then the adequacy issue can be addressed.

Concerns and Challenges

Some issues that will be identified by NSSBA will be more of a concern to some areas of the province than others, however these diverse factors will provide a sense of why the current formula needs reviewing.

First is declining enrollment. With the decrease in births over the past several decades and the resulting decline in school enrollment, the current formula is severely disadvantaging some school boards.

Second is special needs students. School boards, as well as a recent government committee, have recognized that in order to meet the needs of all special needs students, including gifted students, an increase in funding to cover those programs needs to be a high priority. School boards have different number of students in these categories and increasingly do not have the resources to offer programs to meet the needs of these students.

Third is geography. School closures and bussing issues are all interrelated and become cost pressures to school boards. Closely tied to this is the issue of rural schools. It is very challenging for rural schools to offer the same educational opportunities that students have access to in larger urban schools. Then there is the issue of inner-city schools and the unique challenges to offering education in these urban areas.

Other concerns by the NSSBA is that school boards are increasingly challenged by negotiated salary increases for both teaching and non-teaching staff. Other cost pressures are that school board budgets are stretched to cover escalating energy and fuel costs and increasing technology costs, among others.

Suggestions

The NSSBA hopes that any funding system will address the issues that have just been mentioned and recognizes these diverse factors and reflect the following principles:

Equity. To ensure that the formula is not only fixed, but that it is the right formula to provide equitable education funding. The formula must ensure that every student in Nova Scotia has equal access to educational opportunities and programs. Some areas or boards may need more funding because of special characteristics, in order to provide the same programs that are offered in other parts of the province.

Transparency. The distribution of the provincial funding must be open, transparent and accountable. It also needs to be readily understood by all partners, including the public.

Programs and services. All boards need to have adequate funding to provide the provincial curriculum.

The NSSBA would like to commend the province for initiating this review of the funding formula, and are very pleased that Mr. Hogg has been engaged to lead the review process. It is hoped that Mr. Hogg will have the opportunity to consult with a wide cross-section of education partners, especially students, and parents and suggest that he meet with all school boards as well as look at how other provinces fund public education.

DOCUMENTATION

The following documentation was requested by the Standing Committee on Human Resources, and furnished by the Nova Scotia School Board Association.

21. Education Position Paper 2003 - Lead & Achieve Public Consultation Report for Nova Scotia School Boards.

22. Act of Corporation and By-Laws of Nova Scotia School Board Association in relation to requested Terms of Reference and Mandate of the association.

23. Correspondence addressing various request by the Standing Committee
    * costs analysis from individual school boards regarding community use of schools;
    * insurance costs increases for schools over the past year;
    * the number and percentages of gifted students presently within each regional school board.

References to the meeting can be found on the following website.
http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/hansard/comm/hr/hr_2004may11.htm

NOTICES

Notices of committee meetings are sent to all members of the Committee, caucus offices, Legislative staff and the House of Assembly Press Gallery and are posted in Province House.

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTS

Transcripts of these Committee meetings are available from the Legislative Committees Office or on the Committee's web-site at the following address:

http://www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/COMMITTEES/index.html

RESEARCH MATERIAL

All research for the Human Resources Committee is compiled by the committee clerk and researcher and distributed to committee members one week prior to meetings.

ANNUAL REPORTS

All reports from the Human Resources Committee are compiled and written by the committee clerk. Once the Chairman has approved the initial draft, it is then sent to the individual Committee members for consideration. The draft review complete, the final report is prepared and tabled with either the Speaker or the Clerk of the House.

Distribution of the report is as follows: to the Speaker, all members of the Legislature, all witnesses who appeared before the Committee, the Legislative Library, Libraries in Nova Scotia and in all other provinces and territories, all Canadian Human Resources Committees and the media. This report is also available to the general public upon request through the Legislative Committees Office and on the Legislature's website at the following address: www.gov.ns.ca/legislature/committees/index.html

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Committee wishes to extend its gratitude to witnesses for their time and cooperation; The Staff and Representatives of The Department of Education, Nova Scotia Community College, Workers Compensation Board, Public Service Commission of Nova Scotia, The Halifax Regional School Board, the Nova Scotia School Board Association, Ms. Allison Scott, QC, Secretary of the Executive Council and the Staff of the Executive Council's Office. Special thanks goes to: Mr. Robert Kinsman, Manager of Hansard, and Hansard staff; Mr. Jim MacInnis, Co-ordinator Legislative Television and Broadcast Services and Staff, the Legislative Library and Staff and to Mr. Mike Laffin and House of Assembly Operations Staff.

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Standing Committee on Human Resources Annual Report 2003-2004

STATEMENT OF SUBMISSION

All of which is respectfully submitted to the House of Assembly
this 14th day of December, 2004.

Ronald Chisholm
Mr. Ron Chisholm, MLA
Chairman
(Guysborough - Sheet Harbour)

Brooke Taylor
Mr. Brooke Taylor, MLA
(Colchester - Musquodoboit Valley)

Joan Massey
Ms. Joan Massey, MLA
(Dartmouth East)

Cecil L O'Donnell
Mr. Cecil O'Donnell, MLA
(Shelburne)

Russell MacKinnon
Mr. Russell MacKinnon, MLA
(Cape Breton West)

Mr. Frank Corbett, MLA
(Cape Breton Centre)

Leo Glavine
Mr. Leo Glavine, MLA
(Kings West)

Maureen MacDonald
Ms. Maureen MacDonald, MLA
(Halifax Needham)

Diana Whalen
Ms. Diana Whalen, MLA
(Halifax Clayton Park)

APPENDICES

- A) Listing of ABC appointments for the year 2003 – 2004

- B) Workers Compensation Board –
  - 2003 Employers Survey
  - 2003 Injured Workers Survey

- C) Public Service Commission -
  - Requested documentation regarding employment statistics within the Nova Scotia Government

- D) Halifax Regional School Board –
  - HRSB Business Plans;
  - Status report follow-up from the Auditor General's 2001 report;
  - Square Footage regulations per student as required by the Fire Marshal's Office;
  - Breakfast Program;
  - HRSB Policy on use of board facilities;
  - Analysis of cost in making HRSB schools available for community use:
  - Special Education Report;
  - Safe School Initiative – excerpt from the Superintendent's annual report 2003-04;
  - Comparison of funding per pupil in Nova Scotia and other provinces.

- E) Nova Scotia School Board Association –
  - Education Position Paper 2003;
  - Act of Corporation & By-Laws of the NSSBA;
  - Cost analysis of individual school boards regarding community use of schools;
  - Response to insurance costs;
  - Response to the statistics on gifted students.

APPROVED

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

AGENCY, BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Agriculture and Marketing, Fisheries and Aquaculture)		
Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission - Nova Scotia		
Avard Bentley	Chair/Mem	2004-08-31
Greg Coldwell	Member	2004-08-31
Philip Stead	Member	2004-08-31
Farm Loan Board - Nova Scotia		
Stephen Healy	Member	2003-10-21
Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board		
Moody R. McKay	Member	2004-07-27
Michael A. Parker, BSc., BComm	Member	2004-07-27

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (Department of Community Services and the Department of Housing)		
Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre		
Harold Rafuse	Member	2003-12-16
Social Workers' Board of Examiners in		
Colin J. Campbell	Member	2004-04-27
Edward M. MacMaster	Member	2003-11-25

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF		
Film Development Corporation Board - Nova Scotia		
Ernest J. Dick	Director	2004-02-24
Rita Lamontagne MacDonald	Director	2004-02-24
Paul MacKinnon	Director	2004-02-24
Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation		
Brian W. Butler	Director	2004-02-24
Robert Curley	Director	2004-02-24
Frank D. Elliott	Director	2004-02-24
Trade Centre Limited		
Peter Bryson, Q.C.	Director	2004-02-24
David R. Chisholm	Director	2004-02-24
Wayne J. Crawley, CA	Director	2004-02-24

APPROVED

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

AGENCY, BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES (Agriculture and Marketing, Fisheries and Aquaculture)		
Crop and Livestock Insurance Commission - Nova Scotia		
Avard Bentley	Chair/Mem	2004-08-31
Greg Coldwell	Member	2004-08-31
Philip Stead	Member	2004-08-31
Farm Loan Board - Nova Scotia		
Stephen Healy	Member	2003-10-21
Fisheries and Aquaculture Loan Board		
Moody R. McKay	Member	2004-07-27
Michael A. Parker, BSc., BComm	Member	2004-07-27

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY SERVICES (Department of Community Services and the Department of Housing)		
Kings Regional Rehabilitation Centre		
Harold Rafuse	Member	2003-12-16
Social Workers' Board of Examiners in		
Colin J. Campbell	Member	2004-04-27
Edward M. MacMaster	Member	2003-11-25

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF		
Film Development Corporation Board - Nova Scotia		
Ernest J. Dick	Director	2004-02-24
Rita Lamontagne MacDonald	Director	2004-02-24
Paul MacKinnon	Director	2004-02-24
Nova Scotia Liquor Corporation		
Brian W. Butler	Director	2004-02-24
Robert Curley	Director	2004-02-24
Frank D. Elliott	Director	2004-02-24
Trade Centre Limited		
Peter Bryson, Q.C.	Director	2004-02-24
David R. Chisholm	Director	2004-02-24
Wayne J. Crawley, CA	Director	2004-02-24

Waterfront Development Corporation

Alan L. Barkhouse, F.C.A	Director	2003-12-16
Ruth M. Goldbloom, O.C.	Director	2003-12-16
David Harrison	Director	2003-12-16
Robert E. Hartlin	Director	2003-12-16

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION		
Acadia University - Board of Governors		
George E. Bishop, CA	Member	2003-10-21
John B. Carter	Member	2003-10-21
David Fountain	Member	2003-10-21
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority		
J. Urban Cannon	Member	2004-07-27
Heather J. Macpherson	Member	2004-07-27
Colleges and Universities - Nova Scotia Advisory Board on		
Brad Barton	Member	2004-02-24
Bernie MacDonald	Member	2004-05-25
Dr. Charles MacDonald	Member	2004-02-24
Dr. Leslie Oliver	Member	2004-02-24
Cosmetology - Provincial Examining and Licensing Committee		
Andrea Riley	Member	2004-03-30
Johnstone (Dr. P. Anthony) Memorial Fund Entrance Scholarship		
Carolyn Fowler	Member	2004-05-25
Provincial Apprenticeship Board		
Noel R. Doucette (Employees Rep.)\	Member	2004-08-31
Kevin Gerrior (Training Providers Rep.)	Member	2004-08-31
Andrew Jotcham (Employees & Apprentices Rep.)	Member	2004-08-31
Warren Moulaison (Employers Rep.)	Member	2004-08-31
Norman Paupin (Employees Rep.)	Member	2004-08-31
Stephen Vaslet (Employers Rep.)	Member	2004-08-31
University College of Cape Breton - Board of Governors		
Crystal Aboud, BBA, BACS	Member	2003-11-25
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Allan Mac Phee	Member	2003-11-25
Lindsay Robert Marshall	Member	2004-08-31
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Luc MacInnis	Member	2004-01-27
Ms. Jamie Sealy	Member	2004-01-27
Mat Whynott	Member	2004-01-27

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
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Rod Munroe	Member	2004-09-28
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Claudia R. Clarke	Member	2004-08-31
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Aileen M. Heisler	Member	2004-08-31
James. E. MacArthur	Member	2004-08-31
Mary Irene MacInnis	Member	2004-08-31
Mary MacLeod	Member	2004-08-31
Irma Mullen	Member	2004-08-31
Alf. F. Nielsen	Member	2004-08-31
Carman F. Rafuse	Member	2004-08-31
Charles Richard	Member	2004-08-31
Harold Sanford	Member	2004-08-31
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Archie MacKeigan [Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
J. Harris McNamara [Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Susan E. Peverelle [Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Gary Slauenwhite [Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Jacqueline Hatt [Alt. Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Neil Power [Alt. Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Leo van Berkel [Alt. Employer]	Member	2003-12-16
Rick Clarke [Employee]	Member	2003-12-16
Gary W. Fraser [Employee]	Member	2003-12-16
Rob Wells [Employee]	Member	2003-12-16
Cecil MacRae [Alt. Employee]	Member	2003-12-16
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M. Charlene Long (Labour)	Member	2003-12-16
James J. White (Public at Large)	Member	2003-12-16

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DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE		
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Peter Gerard Fardy	Member	2004-02-24

DEPARTMENT	RANK	DATE OF APPROVAL
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH		
Crosbie Memorial Addictions Trust Fund		
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George Libby	Member	2004-03-30
Ralph MacGowan	Member	2004-03-30
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Diane Carrigan-Weir	Member	2003-11-25
Greg MacDonald	Member	2003-11-25
Robert MacKean	Member	2003-11-25
Frank Marshall	Member	2003-11-25
Dispensing Opticians Board		
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John Butler	Member	2003-10-21
Dr. Lystra R. Dayal-Gosine	Member	2003-11-25
Annette Knight	Member	2003-10-21
Robert MacLeod	Member	2003-10-21
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Rick Gilbert	Member	2004-09-28
Don MacDonald	Member	2004-01-27
Heather MacKenzie-Carey	Member	2004-09-28
James Mosher	Member	2003-12-16
James Sunderland	Member	2004-09-28
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David Kilcup	Member	2003-11-25
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Jim Murphy	Member	2004-09-28

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Jim Campbell	Member	2004-09-28
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Armand Goodick	Member	2003-11-25
Nora Jessome	Member	2004-09-28
Robert Lumsden	Member	2003-11-25
Gerald Ritcey	Member	2004-01-27
James Shedden	Member	2004-09-28

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Creighton McCarthy	Member	2004-09-28
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Murray Hill	Chair/Mem.	2003-11-25
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	Member	2004-09-28
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Linda Muir, RN	Member	2003-11-25
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Almon Joseph Chisholm	Member	2003-11-25
	Member	2004-09-28
Loyola MacDonald	Member	2004-09-28
Wendy Panagopoulos	Member	2004-09-28
Allen Radford	Member	2004-02-24

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Terry Ivey	Member	2004-09-28
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Peter Patterson	Member	2003-11-25
Catherine Power	Member	2003-11-25
Daniel Yakimchuk	Member	2003-11-25

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Bryan Darrell	Member	2003-12-16
Terry Daniels	Member	2004-09-28
Anne L. Dillman	Member	2004-04-27
Ed Kinley	Member	2004-09-28
Dr. Frances Moriarty	Member	2003-11-25
Janet Renou	Member	2004-09-28
Robert B. Short	Member	2003-11-25
Tina Tucker	Member	2004-09-28
Karen Willis Duerden	Member	2003-11-25

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Peter McLeod, Ph.D.	Member	2003-11-25
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Nova Scotia Hospital

Anthony Benson	Member	2003-11-25
Garnet Burns	Member	2004-09-28
Bryan Darrell	Member	2003-12-16
Terry Daniels	Member	2004-09-28
Anne L. Dillman	Member	2004-04-27
Ed Kinley	Member	2004-09-28
Dr. Frances Moriarty	Member	2003-11-25
Janet Renou	Member	2004-09-28
Robert B. Short	Member	2003-11-25
Tina Tucker	Member	2004-09-28
Karen Willis Duerden	Member	2003-11-25

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Jean Webb	Member	2004-03-30

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Lloyd Tattrie	Member	2004-03-30

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Dr. Timothy Winslade	Member	2004-08-31

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Mary Seyffert Hamblin	Member	2004-03-30

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Bryan Darrell	Member	2003-12-16
Terry Daniels	Member	2004-09-28
Anne L. Dillman	Member	2004-04-27
Ed Kinley	Member	2004-09-28
Dr. Frances Moriarty	Member	2003-11-25
Janet Renou	Member	2004-09-28
Robert B. Short	Member	2003-11-25
Tina Tucker	Member	2004-09-28
Karen Willis Duerden	Member	2003-11-25

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Paul Kidston	Governor	2004-06-29
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Carolyn R. Moore	Governor	2003-12-16
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Martin J. Pink, Q.C.	Governor	2004-06-29
Susan Wakefield	Governor	2004-06-29
Gaelic College Foundation - Board of Governors		
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Peggy's Cove Commission		
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Sherbrooke Restoration Commission		
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Barbara Jordan	Comm.	2003-11-25
Sharon Reid	Comm.	2004-06-29
Gordon Steedman	Comm.	2003-11-25

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Ronald E. Smith, FCA	Dir.	2003-11-25
Robert D. Waldon	Dir.	2003-11-25

STOOD

STANDING COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES

AGENCY, BOARD AND COMMISSION APPOINTMENTS

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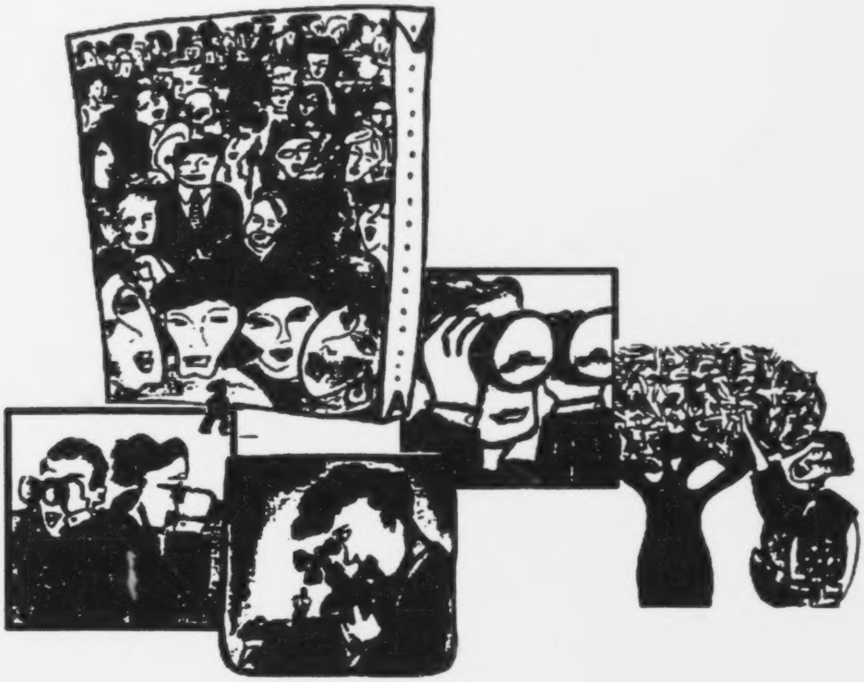
	Subsequently Approved	February 24, 2004
Robert Curley	Director	(January 27, 2004)
	Subsequently Approved	February 24, 2004
Frank D. Elliott	Director	(January 27, 2004)
	Subsequently Approved	February 24, 2004



2003 Employers Survey

Final Report

WORKERS'
COMPENSATION
BOARD of NOVA SCOTIA

CORPORATE RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES INC

2003 Employers Survey

Final Report

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December 2003

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  Appendix A: Study Questionnaire

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Introduction

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia was established in 1917 to provide financial benefits and rehabilitation services to injured workers throughout the province. In the past several years, the workers' compensation system has been significantly overhauled in an effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which these services are provided. As part of these changes, the WCB established corporate performance measures to provide organizational focus and long-term measurable targets consistent with the organization's vision, mission, and values. Corporate performance is now being evaluated using internal and external measures, including annual and quarterly surveys with the organization's key stakeholders including employers, injured workers, and WCB employees.

In 1998, an initial survey was conducted with WCB-registered employers to identify how changes in the system are affecting employers and to establish benchmarks for measuring corporate performance. In 1999 and 2000, the WCB decided to redesign the employer survey to provide a more precise measurement of employer satisfaction and to establish new corporate benchmarks that will guide the organization into the new century. In addition, some questions were added or refined for the 2000 survey to increase comparability with the Injured Worker and Employee Opinion surveys. In 2001, the survey was amended so as to track key questions on a quarterly basis and in the 2002 and 2003 surveys, a few questions were added while others were deleted, so as to examine emerging issues or drop consideration of now dormant issues.

Like the 2003 Quarterly Research, this present study has been undertaken to evaluate the service performance of the WCB from the perspective of one of its key client groups – registered employers across Nova Scotia. While complete tabular results are provided at the end of this report, please note this report emphasizes only key WCB performance measures. More specifically, this study is intended to:

- Track WCB performance on existing benchmark indicators;
- Evaluate service performance across key client subgroups, including business size, region, claims history, penalties history, and payroll frequency;
- Evaluate employers' attitudes concerning assessment-related issues; and
- Provide strategic direction to the WCB in terms of service delivery and communications.

The study is based on approximately 250 telephone interviews conducted quarterly in 2003 with WCB-registered employers, for a total of 1,004 completed interviews. The results from a sample of 1,004 respondents would be expected to provide results accurate to within plus or minus 3.1 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. A more complete description of the methodology is provided at the end of the report.

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This report begins with a concise executive summary, followed by key conclusions, recommendations, and a detailed analysis of the survey findings, including an analysis of results by key employer subgroup (e.g. by ISU or region, claims history and penalties history). In the detailed analysis, comparisons have been made between 2003 results and previous data collected, where applicable. Appended is a copy of the survey questionnaire (Appendix A) and comprehensive banner tables (Appendix B) that present the results for each question by key employer subgroups. These tables are noted by number in the report for easy reference. Unless otherwise noted, all results in this report are expressed as a percentage.

For purposes of comparison, assessments of the WCB are described in relation to those from a similar study of employers in Newfoundland and Labrador who rated the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC). Such comparisons are made only at a high level (i.e., no specific figures are included) and only when questions in the two studies are deemed to be of sufficient similarity to warrant such a comparison.

Executive Summary

The results of the **2003 Employers Survey** once again confirm that employers continue to hold a positive attitude towards the WCB with respect to most of the service areas of interest. Overall, employers continue to perceive the WCB to be effective in its provision of service, as well being fair to employers. Consistent with 2002, being perceived as fair is the factor most likely to be considered critically important by employers when evaluating the WCB. As was the case last year, the results suggest that WCB should work towards moving employers' ratings of WCB's fairness from the "mostly agree" category to the "completely agree" classification. Such efforts would serve to further enhance employers' positive image of WCB.

In terms of protection from litigation, a sizable number of employers are still unaware of the benefits they are entitled to under WCB coverage. It is essential that WCB take action to dispel the myth that injured workers have the right to sue employers in the event of workplace accidents. Continued efforts in this matter should be undertaken. Such action may serve not only to educate employers with valuable information, but also further contribute to the positive image most employers have of the WCB.

In comparison to the 2002 results, satisfaction with industry classification and coverage has remained stable. However, there has been a slight increase in terms of employer satisfaction with the rate at which they were assessed. While this finding does signify an improvement, this rating continues to be slightly lower relative to the high ratings the WCB receives in terms of providing benefits to employers and clearly explaining the assessment system, with respect to the fairness of the assessment and rate setting systems, as well as the affordability and coverage for workers. It is clear from these findings that employers would like to have more of a say in the decisions that affect their business and employees, with many employers endorsing a wide range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system. This provides an excellent opportunity for the WCB in terms of meeting employers assessment rate expectations, as well as involving them in matters that affect the claims' process.

Again this year, the overwhelming majority of employers report that remittance vouchers are easy to complete. Similarly, most employers consider the Statement of Account to be easy to understand, useful, and accurate. Saying that, there has been a slight decrease in the number of employers who find the completion of the wage calculation section and Form 67 Report to be easy to complete, with the percentage currently being comparable to that observed in 2001. Further exploration is required to determine what precisely makes completion of these forms problematic. Once identified, the appropriate steps should be implemented to overcome these issues.

Politeness continues to be the area where staff in both Assessment Services and Client Services receives their highest ratings from employers. With respect to Client Services, the gap analysis that was performed demonstrated there has been a marked improvement in performance most notably in terms of staff's ability to answer questions, the clarity of letters, and the frequency of contact. However, the area that requires attention is the accessibility of staff. In contrast, the service gaps for Assessment

Services remains relatively stable. Taken together, continued effort is required to ensure employers expectations are being met.

Again this year, the WCB's brochures and newsletter receive positive reviews, with the majority indicating the information provided is very useful. In contrast, the use of the WCB's website continues to be limited and if WCB is to maintain its online presence, further identification to barriers to its use among employers is warranted. Similarly, the utilization of the 1-877 number has been slowly diminishing over the past two years and, as such, its continuance should also be reviewed.

Finally, recall of WCB's recent workplace safety advertising campaign is high, with those having seen or heard the ad indicating the campaign was effective in explaining its intended message. Overall, television appears to be the most influential medium, followed distantly by radio, newspaper, and others.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are drawn from the findings of this research:

- **In 2003, two-thirds of employers consider the WCB to be effective in providing service, a result that has remained constant over time.**

  In terms of effectiveness in providing service and being fair to employers, the WCB's ratings have remained stable in 2003, with two-thirds of employers offering a positive evaluation of the WCB in each of these areas. Similarly, seven in ten believe the WCB is fair to employers. In keeping with last year's findings, it is important to note that with respect to fairness, the majority of employers continue to "mostly agree," rather than "completely agree," that the WCB is fair.

  Results of this study confirm that when evaluating WCB services, employers place great importance on fairness, followed by the ability to answer questions, the clarity of letters, promptness, the payroll reporting process, and others. In contrast, the factor they are least likely to perceive as critically important is the frequency of contact. These findings are similar to those observed in 2002. In addition, and consistent with the 2002 study, three-quarters of employers are in agreement that the WCB provides a benefit to employers.

- **The percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents has remained stable since 2002.**

  While the number of Nova Scotia employers who are cognizant of the fact that employees cannot sue for workplace accidents has remained stable year over year, it is evident from this study that a significant minority of employers still do not have a clear understanding of their rights under such circumstances.

- **The majority of employers continue to strongly favour a wider range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system.**

  After experiencing a small decline in 2001, the percentage of employers who believe the experience rating system gives them some degree of control over the cost of their WCB rates or premiums has remained stable. Similarly, eight in ten employers continue to favour a wider range of merits and demerits under experience rating.

- **Satisfaction with industry classification used and the coverage provided to workers has remained stable, while satisfaction with the assessed rate has improved.**

  Just over half of employers express satisfaction with the rate at which their company was assessed, which represents an increase of six percentage points from 2002. Similarly, one-half of employers are satisfied with the industry classification used to set their rates. While improving, it is evident that employers would still appreciate having a greater say in the rate setting process.

With respect to perceptions of the coverage provided to workers by the WCB, the majority of employers continue to express satisfaction with this aspect of performance.

- **In general, employers continue to say staff in the Assessment Services Division provides a moderate to high level of service in terms of their knowledge and client skills.**

  Perceptions of the service received from the Assessments Services Division remains consistent when compared with 2002. Employers continue to be most likely to express satisfaction with the politeness of staff, with just over three-quarters offering such a positive assessment of the WCB in this regard. One in seven express satisfaction in the area of clarity of forms, as well as in the division's accessibility. Likewise, two-thirds of employers are pleased with this division's promptness of service and knowledge. It is also important to note that the Assessment Services Division receives a positive evaluation in terms of treating clients with respect and providing the assistance required.

  A gap analysis reveals that improving the staff's ability to treat employers fairly, making staff more accessible and providing a prompt service offers the best opportunities to raise employer ratings of the Assessment Service Division.

- **There has been a decline in employers' level of ease in completing the wage section of the Accident Report Form and Form 67 Report.**

  In 2003, one-half of employers rate the ease of completing the wage calculation section as well as completing the Form 67 Report of Accident somewhat or very easy. This represents a significant decline in both of these areas since 2002 (ease of completing the wage calculation section down 9 percentage points and the level of ease in completing the Form 67 Report of Accident down 13 percentage points from 2002). Despite these declines, the figures obtained in 2003 are consistent with those observed in 2001. In terms of communicating accident reports to WCB, faxing continues to be the most preferred communication vehicle and is consistent with the 2002 findings.

- **Satisfaction has remained stable in all areas of service, with employers expressing moderate to high levels of satisfaction with Client Services staff.**

  Similar to ratings of Assessment Services staff, the Client Services Division also receives its strongest ratings in terms of politeness, with just over eight in ten providing such a rating. Similarly, seven in ten employers also rate Client Services staff positively in terms of clarity of letters, ability to answer questions, and promptness of service. In contrast, staff members receive somewhat lower scores in terms of accessibility and frequency of contact. These findings are in line with those obtained in 2002.

A gap analysis reveals that in comparison to last year, there has been marked improvement in most areas, most notably in terms of Client Services staff' ability to answer questions (improved by 14 points since 2002), clarity of letters (12 points), and frequency of contact (9 points). The only performance area where there has been deterioration in the performance gap is in terms of staff accessibility (worsened by 8 points).

- **Client Services staff continue to be perceived positively by employers in terms of treating them with respect, and in terms of their case knowledge.**

  Results of this study illustrate that the Client Services Division continues to be held in high esteem in terms of treating clients with respect, and is consistent with the findings of the 2002 study. Similarly, the Division's staff receives a positive evaluation pertaining to their case knowledge, however, relatively speaking, the perception of employer involvement in decisions and planning that affects their workers' claims or cases is considerably lower.

- **In keeping with findings from recent years, most employers continue to state they receive sufficient information about the WCB.**

  Overall, employers are satisfied with the amount of information they have received from the WCB regarding its activities. This finding is consistent with that obtained in 2002. Similarly, the overwhelming majority of employers believe that WCB and the newsletter 'Inside Workers Compensation' provides useful information.

- **Consistent with 2002, submitting payments at the same time as their CCRA payments is regarded as a major benefit. As well, the Statement of Account continues to be both easy to understand and useful.**

  More than eight in ten of those surveyed would prefer to remit their WCB payments at the same time as their CCRA payments, and this is consistent with last year, with the majority preferring monthly payroll reports. Similarly, employers' evaluation of the Statement of Account is once again positive, with eight in ten stating the Statement of Account is easy to understand, and also indicating that it provides useful information. Likewise, the overwhelming majority consider the Statement of Account to be an accurate reflection of the information they submit to the WCB.

- **Use of the 1-877 telephone number and the Website remains low.**

  While usage of the 1-877 telephone number continues to lag, those who have availed of this service are pleased with the ease of access. Likewise, few employers are taking advantage of WCB's website. In contrast, awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry appears to be slowly increasing, with a five percent increase being observed in 2003. This increase now means that one-third of employers are reporting awareness of this registry.

- **Recall of the WCB's recent advertising campaign was relatively high.**

  Results of this study reveal that seven in ten employers have seen advertising pertaining to workplace safety in the past two months. Those who recall seeing such advertisements generally displayed a positive attitude towards the message the ad was trying to convey regarding workplace safety. Overall, television ads appear to be the most frequently recalled, while radio and newspapers ads follow a distant second and third.

Recommendations

Based on the results and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are presented to the Workers' Compensation Board for consideration:

1. **As a measure designed to boost overall employer satisfaction, the WCB should focus resources on enhancing its capabilities as an interactive service provider.**

   It is evident that employers continue to be less than satisfied with their level of involvement in decisions that affect both their businesses and workers. While employers appear to express a slightly more positive attitude towards the rate at which they were assessed, this percentage along with satisfaction with industry classification is less than optimal. Similarly, while the majority of employers feel that Client Services staff treat them with respect and have a good knowledge of their case, six in ten continue to feel they are involved in decisions or planning that affect their workers.

   It is understood that there are potentially some limitations with respect to employers' level of involvement with some decisions. However, WCB should review these areas and identify ways in which employers can become more involved in these processes. Increasing employers' perception of involvement in decisions that ultimately affect them and creating an atmosphere of working together in partnership may serve to have a positive impact. Ideally, informing employers as to why the processes that have been established should remain and what benefits it provides to employers and their workers may potentially have a positive impact, as employers may have a greater appreciation for the WCB's activities in these areas.

   In addition, there continue to be avenues for employer interaction and participation that are either under-utilized or not well known. For example, results of this study clearly demonstrate that the use of the WCB's website remains low, with less than two in ten employers having accessed it in the past six months. If WCB wishes to maintain its on-line presence, consideration should be given to better promotion of its site. First of all, WCB should identify why employers are not using the site and determine what, if anything, will encourage utilization of this service. It is possible that employers are simply not aware of this resource or perhaps the information they are looking for is not contained within the site. To increase usage of this medium, it is essential that the WCB determine what the prohibiting factors are and consequently take the appropriate steps to address them.

   It is also evident that utilization of the 1-877 telephone service has been diminishing over the past two years. Given its limited use, consideration should be given to better promoting this service if this is deemed desirable.

2. **There is still a need for WCB to increase awareness among employers of the benefit of protection from litigation by injured workers.**

   As a significant minority of employers continue to believe that injured workers have the right to sue their employers for workplace accidents, there is need to correct this misconception. Communicating the fact that protection from litigation is a benefit that employers are entitled to as a result of WCB may serve to further strengthen the WCB's strong image among employers. As such, consideration should be given to developing a communications campaign to provide employers with this knowledge.

3. **The WCB should re-evaluate the wage section of the Accident Report Form and the Form 67 Report with an eye toward revising them, or alternatively provide enhanced information designed to assist in completing these documents.**

   The results of this study indicate that in comparison to 2002, there has been a significant decline in the percentage of employers who report ease in completing the wage calculation of the Accident Report Form (down 9 percentage points since 2002) and Form 67 Report (down 13 percentage points since 2002). As such, consideration should be given to identifying what precisely employers are having difficulty with and then once identified, steps should be taken to address these issues. An alternative approach to this issue would be to offer employers an online training module in which completion of these two forms was clearly articulated. One component of such a module should provide employers with an opportunity to complete the form on their own, and then pose questions online as they encounter difficulties.

Detailed Analysis

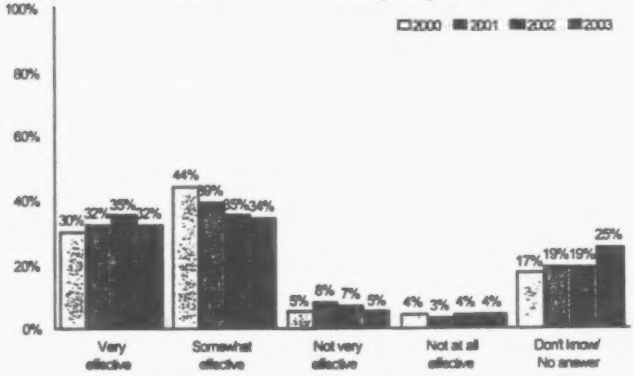
Workers' Compensation System and Image

Effectiveness of the WCB

In 2003, two-thirds of employers consider the WCB to be effective in providing service, a result that has remained constant over time.

Overall, two-thirds of those surveyed consider the WCB to be effective in its service, stable compared with 2002 results. Nonetheless, some variations in opinion across the various Integrated Service Units (ISUs) are observed. For example, employers in the Cape Breton region (78%) continue to be more likely than those from mainland Nova Scotia to consider the WCB to be very effective in providing service, as are those classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' category (86%). (Table 2.2)

Effectiveness in Providing Service to Employers



As well, large businesses continue to be more likely than small businesses to offer an opinion regarding the effectiveness of the WCB (29% of small businesses do not offer an opinion, compared with 11% of large businesses). Similarly, eight in ten large businesses rate the WCB as effective (38% very effective, 44% somewhat effective), compared with six in ten small businesses offering a similar opinion (31% very effective, 31% somewhat effective).

Others more likely to consider the WCB to be somewhat or very effective in providing service include: employers with at least one claim (84%), those who have received an Experience Rating merit (77%), employers who have filed a claims appeal (85%), and businesses with more frequent payroll (four times a month 89%, two times a month 83%). Perhaps not surprisingly, employers who have received a penalty for late accident reporting (30%) are considerably more likely than others to consider the WCB to be ineffective. In addition to small businesses, those most likely to not offer an opinion regarding the WCB's effectiveness include employers located in the Central North Shore area (32%), the South

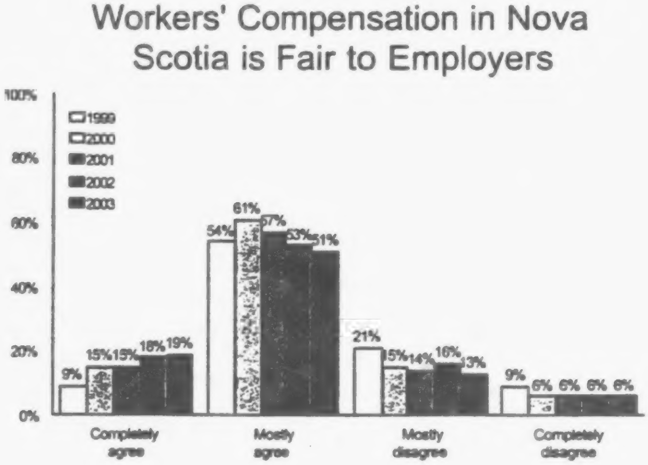
Shore/Valley area (32%), the Halifax/Halifax County area (25%), those who have never filed a claim (29%), employers those who have received an Experience Rating demerit (27%), those who have been late paying their premiums (21%), and employers with less frequent payroll (monthly 27%, quarterly 26%).

Of note, perceived effectiveness of workers' compensation organizations varies substantially between jurisdictions. Specifically, results reveal a large majority of employers in Nova Scotia report the WCB of NS to be effective in its service to them, while fewer employers in Newfoundland and Labrador express the same opinion regarding the WHSCC.

Fairness to Employers

Seven in ten employers continue to believe the WCB is fair to employers.

Another overall measure of opinion concerning the WCB focuses on the percentage of employers who consider the WCB to be fair in its treatment of employers, and results are stable compared with those observed over the past two years. In 2003, seven in ten of those surveyed express agreement that the WCB is fair to employers, while two in ten express disagreement. (Table 2.5)



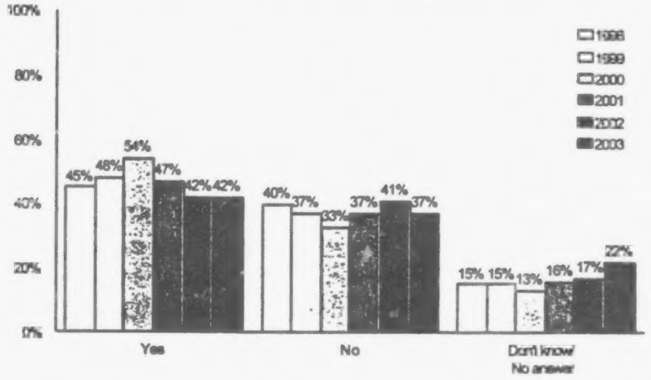
Those most likely to agree the WCB is fair to employers include employers assigned to the ISU 'other/miscellaneous' category (80% agree), and those with payrolls two times a month (80%). In addition, employers in Nova Scotia are slightly more likely than their Newfoundland and Labrador counterparts to believe workers' compensation in the province is fair to employers.

Protection from Litigation

The percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents has remained stable since 2002.

The 2003 study again assessed perceptions held by employers regarding whether or not injured workers can sue employers for workplace accidents. In keeping with the findings of 2002, the percentage of employers who believe injured workers can sue for workplace accidents has remained stable, with four in ten believing that injured workers have the right to sue employers. Similarly, another four in ten believe that injured workers cannot sue employers, while approximately one-fifth (22%) do not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 2.4)

Can Injured Workers Sue Employers for Accidents?



Employers who filed accident reports late (45%), employers who have earned an Experience Rating merit (44%), and those who have filed an assessment appeal (41%) are most inclined to state injured workers may can sue employers for workplace accidents, as are those with quarterly payrolls (48%).

Evaluating the WCB

Fairness and the ability to answer questions continue to be critically important considerations when evaluating the WCB's services.

Employers were asked to indicate how important various aspects of the WCB's service are to them when evaluating the service provided by the WCB. While most employers consider each factor to be important, they are most likely to identify fairness to be critically important in their evaluations of the WCB. This is especially evident among employers who have filed an assessment appeal (90%). No other demographic differences were observed (Table 2.8.7)

In general, the order of the perceived importance of the various evaluation factors has remained the same compared with 2002, with the issue of fairness being the most important factor, followed by the ability to answer questions, and the clarity of letters. In addition, other factors that are seen as important, but to a lesser extent include promptness of staff, payroll reporting process, politeness of staff and staff accessibility. Of interest, frequency of contact with the WCB received the lowest rating in terms of importance. (Tables 2.8.1-8)

The following differences are noted across the employer population:

Employers who have filed late accident reports (36%) are less likely than others to consider **accessibility** to be a critically important factor;

Employers with payroll two times a month (62%) are more likely than others to consider **promptness** to be critically important;

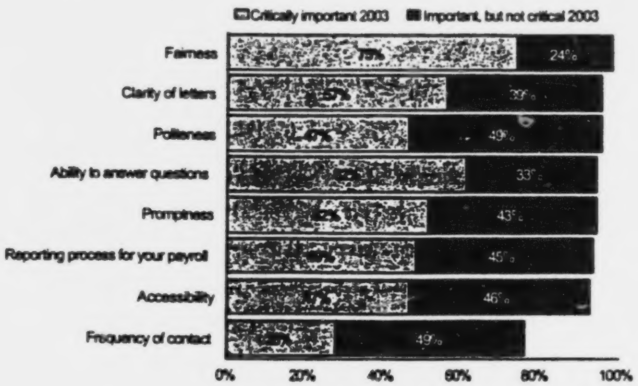
Those most likely to consider the **ability to answer questions** to be critically important include those who have filed an assessment appeal (77%), and employers with payroll two times a month (71%);

Frequency of contact is more likely to be rated as critically important by employers with quarterly payroll (39%), small businesses (30%), and those who have filed at least one claim (20%), and is less likely to be considered critically important by employers who have filed late accident reports (8%);

Politeness of WCB staff is most likely to be rated as critically important by employers who have filed a claims appeal (57%), and is less likely to be considered critically important by employers who have been late filing an accident report (34%), and those with payroll two times a month (39%).

Those most likely to consider the **reporting process for payroll** to be critically important include employers with payroll two times a month (62%), while employers who have been late filing accident reports (36%) are less likely to consider this factor to be critically important.

Importance of Evaluating WCB's Services



Assessment Rates and Experience Rating

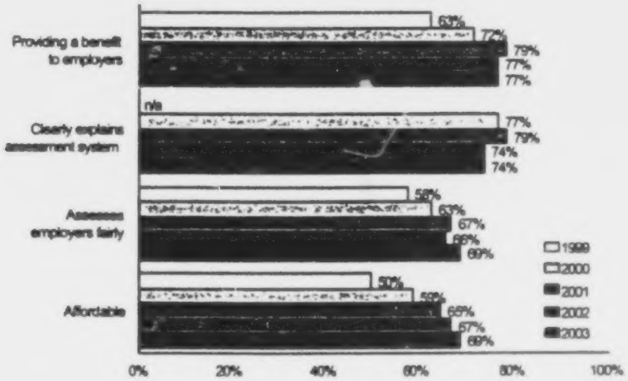
In 2003, employers are satisfied with WCB's assessment and rate setting system.

General Perceptions of Assessment Rates

Employer perceptions regarding the WCB assessment system are consistent with those observed in the previous two years.

General Perceptions of Assessment System

% Completely/Mostly Agree



Of those surveyed seven in ten continue to agree the WCB's coverage is affordable, while three in ten (27%) disagree. Those most likely to consider the WCB to be affordable include employers with quarterly payroll (76%), those who have never had a claim (70%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (75%), those with late premium payments (69%), and employers who have earned an Experience Rating demerit (68%). In contrast, employers who have been late filing an accident report (41%) are least likely to consider the WCB to be affordable. (Table 3.1.1)

Employers continue to be apt to perceive that the WCB provides a benefit, with three-quarters agreeing **the WCB is providing a benefit to employers**. Consistent with 2002 results, two in ten (18%) employers disagree the WCB provides a benefit, while few (5%) do not offer an opinion. Employers in Central/North Shore (84%), and those who are classified in the ISU 'other/ miscellaneous' category (85%), are more likely to agree the WCB provides a benefit to employers. In contrast, employers who have filed an accident report late (55%) are least likely to agree the WCB provides a benefit to employers. (Table 3.1.2)

Based on their claims cost experience, seven in ten employers agree **the WCB assesses employers fairly**. Employers from the Halifax area (62%) and Cape Breton (62%) are less likely than others to believe the WCB assesses employers fairly. In addition, employers who have been late filing an accident report (49%) or have filed an assessment appeal (42%) are least likely to consider the WCB to be fair in its assessment of employers. (Table 3.1.3)

More than seven in ten employers continue to rate the WCB positively in terms of **clearly explaining the assessment system**, while just over two in ten do not agree the assessment system is clearly explained. Employers who have filed an accident report late (57%) are least likely to say the WCB clearly explains the assessment system. No other demographic differences were observed. (Table 3.1.4)

General Perceptions of Experience Rating

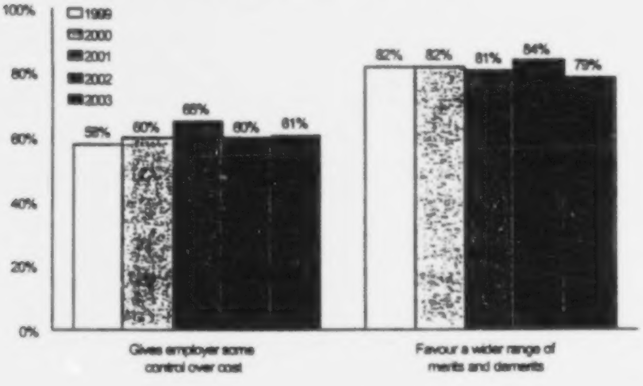
The majority of employers continue to strongly favour a wider range of merits and demerits under the experience rating system.

WCB-registered businesses are assessed at a rate of payment based on a number of factors such as the industry in which they work and the number of previous accidents and costs at their workplace. Further, the experience rating system modifies an employer's industry rate to reflect individual claims experience. Employers' satisfaction with their assessed rates, no doubt, plays a role in determining their overall level of satisfaction towards the WCB.

After experiencing a decline in 2002 in the percentage of employers who believe the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their WCB rates or premiums, it appears that employers' views have remained stable over the past year. More specifically, six in ten of those surveyed continue to express agreement, while three in ten disagreeing with this statement. The remaining nine percent do not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 3.2.1)

Employers in the Halifax area (56%) are least likely to agree the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their WCB rates/premiums. No other demographic differences were observed. Provincially, employers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be more inclined than those in Nova Scotia to agree the experience rating system gives them some control over the cost of their workers' compensation rates and premiums.

Likewise, the percentage of employers who favour a wider range of merits and demerits under experience rating is stable at eight in ten. Ratings are fairly consistent across the employer population, with the exception of employers with payroll two times a month, who are more likely to favour a wider range of merits and demerits (75% agree). Overall, close to one in ten (7%) disagree a wider range of merits and demerits should be included, while one in ten (14%) do not offer an opinion. Of interest, results continue to show little difference between employers in Newfoundland and Labrador and those in Nova Scotia in terms of their support for a wider range of merits and demerits. (Table 3.2.2)



General Perceptions of Experience Rating
% Completely/Mostly Agree

Satisfaction with the Assessment System

Satisfaction with industry classification used and the coverage provided to workers has remained stable, while satisfaction with assessed rate has improved.

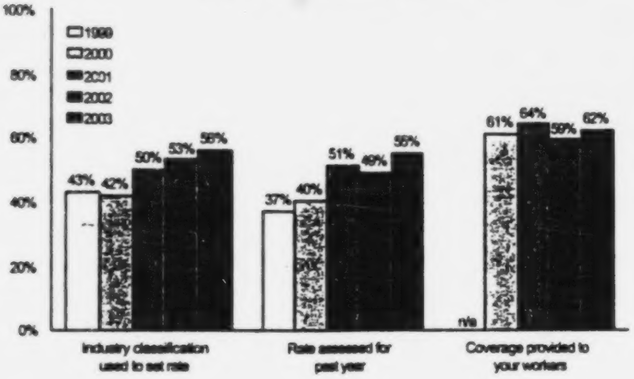
The percentage of employers who are completely or mostly satisfied with the rate assessed for their company modestly increased this year. In 2003, the majority of employers are satisfied with their company's rate assessment, with just over one-half indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard (an increase of 6 percentage points as compared with 2002), while one in four employers (23%) is dissatisfied with their assessment rate. The remaining two in ten (19%) are only somewhat satisfied.

Employers most likely to be satisfied with their assessment rate include employers with less frequent payrolls (quarterly, 61% and monthly, 54%), small businesses (56%), those who have not made a claim (57%), those who have received an ER Merit (56%) and those who have been late with their payment premiums (52%). In contrast, employers in Cape Breton are least likely to express satisfaction with their assessment rate (48%). (Table 3.3.1)

In terms of the industry classification that was used to set their rates, just over one-half of those surveyed state they are mostly or completely satisfied with their industry classification, unchanged compared with 2002. Those least likely to be satisfied with their industry classification include employers with monthly payroll (54%) and those who have filed an assessment appeal (37%). Overall, two in ten (18%) of those surveyed are dissatisfied, while the same proportion (18%) are only somewhat satisfied with their company's industry classification. (Table 3.3.2)

Consistent with 2002, the majority of employers continue to be satisfied with the coverage provided to their workers, with six in ten indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard. Notably, while no differences are observed between larger and small businesses with respect to industry classification and assessment rate, large businesses express higher levels of satisfaction in terms of coverage compared with small businesses (70% as compared to 60%). As well, those most likely to be satisfied with the coverage provided to workers include employers with at least one claim (74%), those who have filed a claims appeal (73%), those with an experience rating merit (71%), as well as those employers in the ISU classification of 'other/miscellaneous' (73%). In contrast, employers with monthly payroll (61%) are less inclined to be satisfied with coverage provided to their workers.

Overall, fewer than one in ten employers (7%) are dissatisfied with the coverage provided to their workers, and just over two in ten (15%) are somewhat satisfied. More than one in ten (16%) do not offer an opinion regarding coverage. (Table 3.3.3)



Satisfaction with Assessment System

% Completely/Mostly Satisfied

Assessment Services Division

In general, employers continue to say staff in the Assessment Services Division provides a moderate to high level of service in terms of their knowledge and client skills.

Satisfaction with Assessment Services Division

The survey asked employers to rate the service they have been receiving from the WCB's Assessment Services Division, which is the department that deals with the financial aspects of the WCB such as rates, classification, payroll estimating, experience rating, clearance letters, and collecting annual assessments. Across the range of service elements, satisfaction with the WCB is stable compared with that observed in 2002.

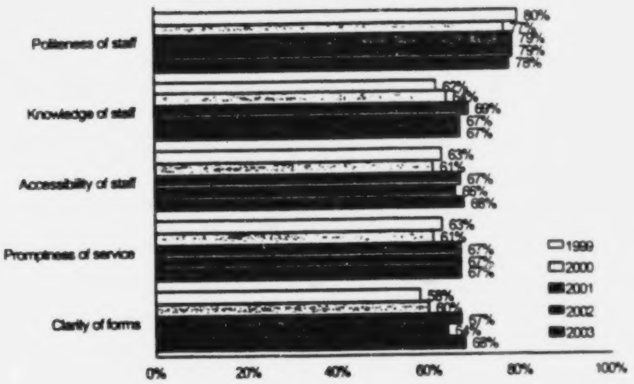
Seven in ten employers continue to view the staff of the WCB Assessment Services Division as being **accessible**. Those most likely to be mostly or completely satisfied in this regard include employers in Cape Breton (73%) and those in the ISU classification of 'other/miscellaneous' (75%). In contrast, employers who have filed a late accident report (62%) are least likely to be satisfied with the WCB. Employers in Nova Scotia continue to offer more positive ratings regarding the accessibility of WCB Assessment Services Division staff, as compared to employers in Newfoundland and Labrador vis-à-vis the WHSCC Assessment Services Department staff. (Table 4.1.1)

In fourth quarter 2003, employers who indicated that they were less than 'completely' or 'mostly' satisfied with the coverage provided to their workers by the WCB were further asked why they were less than fully satisfied with this service. Overall, two in ten reported that the WCB Assessment Service's staff are inaccessible or hard to reach, while just over one in ten attributed their low rating to either poor communication or lack of information (13%), lack of personal contact, or that they do not like voice mail (12%), slow response times or staff not returning calls (12%). No other specific reason was provided by more than 10 percent of this group. (Table 4.1.1.1)

In terms of the **promptness** of the service provided by WCB staff, just over two-thirds of those surveyed continue to express satisfaction with the WCB. Employers with (80%) payroll four times a month, those who have filed an appeal assessment (77%), and larger businesses (73%) are most likely to express satisfaction with the WCB in this regard. (Table 4.1.2) In addition, slightly higher ratings are given by employers in Nova Scotia compared with those in Newfoundland and Labrador, with respect to the promptness of service offered by Assessment Services staff members at the respective workers' compensation organizations.

Satisfaction with Assessment Services Division

% Completely/Mostly Satisfied



Perceptions regarding the **knowledge of WCB staff** are consistent year over year, with two-thirds of employers indicating they are mostly or completely satisfied with the WCB in this regard. Employers with payroll four times a month (83%) and two times a month (72%) payroll are more apt to express satisfaction with the knowledge of WCB staff, along with those who have had at least one claim (73%), larger businesses (72%), those in Cape Breton (71%), and in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (76%). Moreover, employers in Nova Scotia offer similar levels of satisfaction concerning the knowledge levels of WCB staff members, as do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Table 4.1.3)

One of the strongest attributes of the WCB staff in the Assessment Services Division continues to be the level of **politeness** they display to their clients. Indeed, eight in ten employers are satisfied with the WCB's performance in this regard, and these results are stable compared with 2001 and 2002. Employers with payroll four times a month (91%), those who have filed an accident report late (86%), those classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (84%), those who have had at least one claim (83%), and larger businesses (82%) were more likely to express satisfaction in this regard. (Table 4.1.4)

Satisfaction with the **clarity of forms** required by the Assessment Services Division is stable, with seven in ten employers indicating they are satisfied with the performance of the Assessment Services Division in this regard. Employers classified in the 'other/miscellaneous' ISU category (77%), those who have appealed a claim (74%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (72%), along with larger businesses (72%) are more likely to express satisfaction the clarity of forms. In addition, employers with at least one claim (68%) are least likely to be satisfied with the WCB in this regard. (Table 4.1.5) Further analysis reveals that employers in Nova Scotia continue to be more likely to be satisfied with the clarity of forms required by the WCB, than are employers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

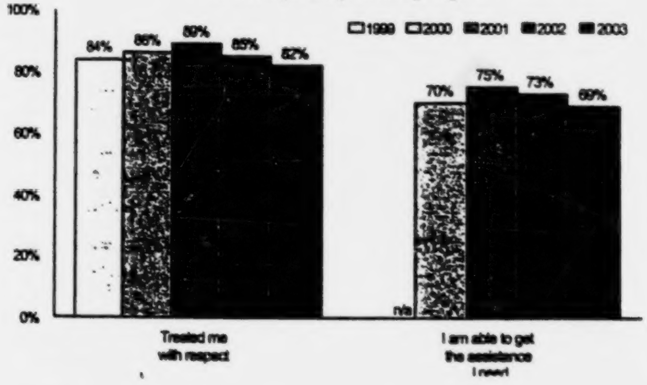
Effectiveness of Assessment Services Division

Assessment Services staff members continue to be perceived as treating employers with respect and providing the assistance employers require.

Assessment Services Division staff were also evaluated concerning the extent to which they treat clients with respect, as well as the extent to which clients are able to obtain the information they need from the first person in the Division with whom they speak.

Effectiveness in Assessment Services Division

% Completely/Mostly Agree



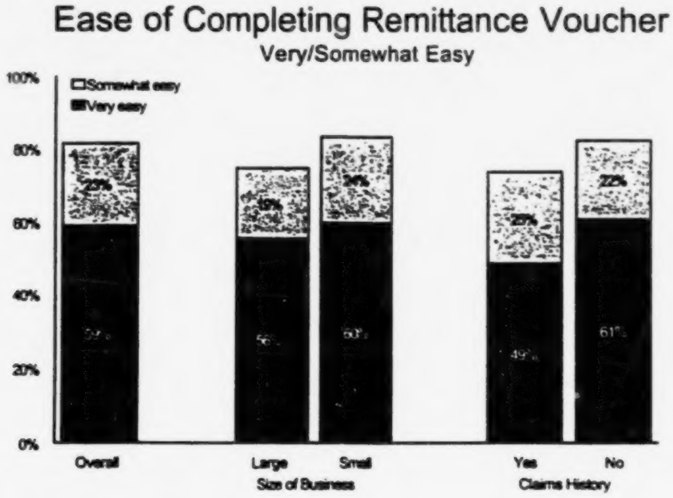
Assessment Division staff continue to receive a very strong endorsement in terms of **treating clients with respect**, with eight in ten of those surveyed agreeing they are treated with respect. Employers who have had at least one previous claim (92%), those who have filed an assessment appeal (93%), those who have been late reporting an accident (92%), along with those with more frequent payroll (two times a month 88% and four times a month 94%) are more likely to express satisfaction in this regard. (Table 4.2.1)

As well, seven in ten employers indicate they are **able to get the information they need** from the first person in the Assessment Services Division with whom they speak, a result that is consistent with that obtained in 2002. Large businesses (74%) are most apt to express with this aspect of service. In contrast, employers in Central and North Shore (65%), along with those who have filed an assessment appeal (59%) are less likely to express satisfaction. (Table 4.2.2)

Remittance Voucher

The ease of completing the remittance voucher remains high and stable.

The form submitted when making an Assessment Payment Plan payment is called a remittance voucher, and employers were asked to assess the ease with which they are able to complete this form. Consistent with previous findings, eight in ten employers say it is somewhat or very easy to complete a remittance voucher. Employers with no claims history continue to be more likely than those with at least one claim to state remittance vouchers are easy to complete, as are smaller businesses. In contrast, employers with payroll four times a month are less likely to believe the remittance voucher is easy to complete. (Table 4.4)



Gap Analysis – Assessment Services

Since 2002, the gap scores for Assessment Services either have remained stable or widened slightly.

The 2003 *Employers' Survey* included a series of questions that assessed service factors in terms of their level of importance as well as level of satisfaction. By collecting ratings of importance and satisfaction it is possible to conduct a gap analysis. Such an analysis compares clients' expectations on a set of service factors with an organization's performance on those factors. A gap analysis is an excellent indicator of the particular service aspects the WCB should focus upon to better serve its clients. It also permits the prioritization of factors to identify those in which there is a potential gap in performance, that is, areas in which the organization is not meeting client expectations.

Gap scores are calculated as the percentage of clients who rate a factor as critically important *and* are less than completely satisfied with performance on that factor. Higher gap scores indicate greater gaps between expectation and performance and represent areas in which attention could be focused in terms of improvement. It should be noted, however, that gap scores tend to be higher for public sector organizations compared with private sector organizations.

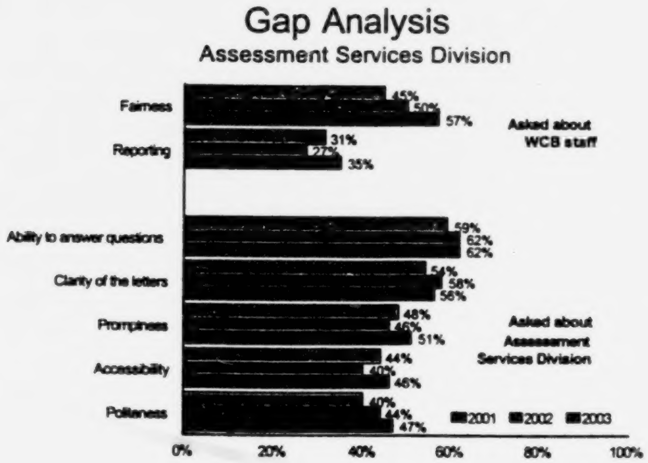
As illustrated in the preceding table, 204 employers rate fairness of the WCB staff as a critically important aspect of service. Of those 204 employers, 143 of them are less than completely satisfied with the fairness of staff at the WCB. Thus, out of all 250 employers surveyed on this series of questions, 143 believe fairness of WCB staff is of critical importance, but are not completely satisfied with staff fairness, producing a gap score of 143/250 = 57 percent. In other words, six in ten employers are of the opinion that fairness is a critically important factor, and that the WCB is not meeting their expectations in this regard.

Gap Analysis Calculation: Example

Fairness of the WCB staff

	Completely Satisfied	Not Completely Satisfied	Total
Critically Important	61	**143**	204
Not Critically Important	18	28	46
Total	79	171	**250**

It should be noted that separate gap analyses were carried out for Assessment Services and Client Services. Results for Client Services are presented later. Also, the analyses reported here were conducted using data only from the fourth quarter of 2003. In addition, two of the factors, fairness and reporting, were not specifically posed concerning Assessment Services staff, rather, they were asked in regards to the WCB generally. They are included here for purposes of comparison. Overall, the results of the gap analysis indicate that the gaps in 2003 have remained stable or have increased slightly. Most notably, areas that could be deemed of higher priority for the Assessment Services Division include **fairness** (an increase of 7 percentage points since 2002), **accessibility** (up 6 percentage points), and **promptness** (up 5 percentage points).



Accident Reporting

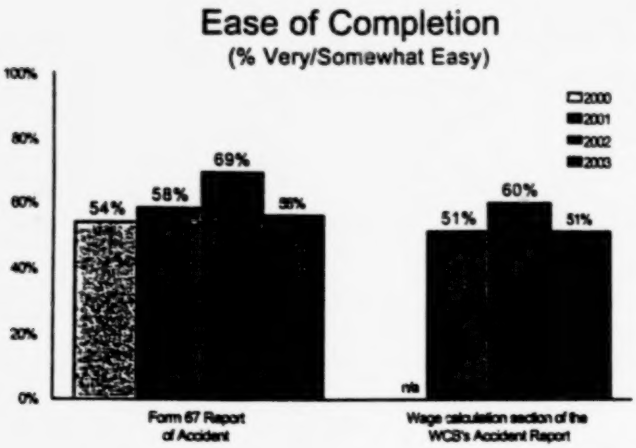
There has been a decline in employers' level of ease in completing both the wage section of the Accident Report Form, as well as the Form 67 Report.

Questions related to Accident Report Form were only asked of those employers whose total number of claims and the number of time-loss claims totalled two or more. A new Accident Report form was introduced by the WCB at the end of 2000, and employers were asked to evaluate the form in terms of ease of completion in all three years that this survey subsequently has been administered.

Ease of Reporting

Employers were asked to rate the level of ease in completing the wage calculation section of the WCB Accident Report Form. One-half employers (51%, down 9 percentage points from 2002) say it is somewhat or very easy to complete this section, while two in ten (up 8 points) feel it is very or somewhat difficult to complete this section. Two in ten (20%) indicate completing this section is neither difficult nor easy, while one in ten (10%) do not offer an opinion. (Table 5.1.3)

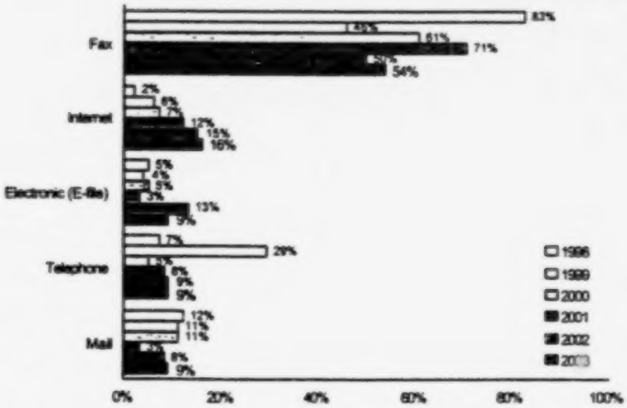
In addition, employers were asked to assess the level of ease in completing the Form 67 Report of Accident. In 2003, just over one-half (56%) indicate this form is somewhat or very easy to complete, which represents a significant decline in comparison to last year (a drop of 13 percentage points), but is consistent with that observed in 2000. As well, over one in ten find the form somewhat difficult to complete, while two in ten state the form is neither difficult nor easy to complete. Only seven percent of those surveyed did not offer an opinion on this matter. (Table 5.1.6) Across the provinces, in contrast to last year a smaller percentage of employers in Nova Scotia now say the Report of Accident Form is easy to complete than do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador with reference to that province's Report of Injury Form.



Method of Reporting

Employers were also asked to identify their preferred method of communicating accident reports to the WCB. Consistent with previous years, fax still remains the most preferred method by a wide margin over any other communication method. (Table 5.2)

Preferred Method of Reporting Accidents



Larger businesses (63%) are considerably more likely than small businesses (36%) to identify fax as their preferred reporting method, while small businesses are more likely to prefer telephone (22%, as compared with 2% for large businesses) or mail (21%, as compared with 3%). Furthermore, employers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to agree with those in Nova Scotia that fax is the preferred method for reporting accidents.

Client Services Division

Satisfaction has remained stable in all areas of service, with employers expressing moderate to high levels of satisfaction with Client Services staff.

The Client Services Division is responsible for managing the claims filed by workers and employers, including receiving accident reports, processing the forms, and paying benefits. Employers with at least two claims and/or time loss claims experience were asked to rate various aspects of service they have been receiving from the WCB's Client Services Division. The following table illustrates employers' levels of satisfaction with various aspects of the WCB's Client Services Division. (Tables 6.1.1-6)

Satisfaction with Client Services Division

	Completely/Mostly Satisfied %					Somewhat/Completely Dissatisfied %				
	'99	'00	'01	'02	**'03**	'99	'00	'01	'02	**'03**
Politeness of staff	79	73	75	84	**83**	1	2	3	2	**3**
Clarity of letters	n/a	66	67	74	**69**	n/a	2	6	4	**7**
Ability to answer questions	65	63	69	70	**69**	3	5	6	4	**8**
Promptness of service	70	65	63	69	**70**	4	7	8	5	**4**
Accessibility of staff	64	55	58	66	**67**	3	8	11	10	**8**
Frequency of contact	51	56	61	62	**64**	8	5	9	8	**8**

Overall, employers express moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the Client Services Division, and levels of satisfaction with **politeness of staff**, **clarity of letters**, **promptness of service**, and **accessibility of staff** are in keeping with those observed in 2002.

Employers continue to express the highest level of satisfaction with respect to **politeness of staff**, with satisfaction remaining constant over the past two years. Seven in ten employers express satisfaction with respect to **clarity of letters** (down 5 points), **ability to answer questions** (stable compared with 2002), and **promptness of service** (stable).

Employers continue to be least likely to be completely or mostly satisfied with the **accessibility of staff** and **frequency of contact**, although satisfaction with the WCB with respect to these points is consistent with those observed last year with two-thirds of employers expressing satisfaction in both of these areas.

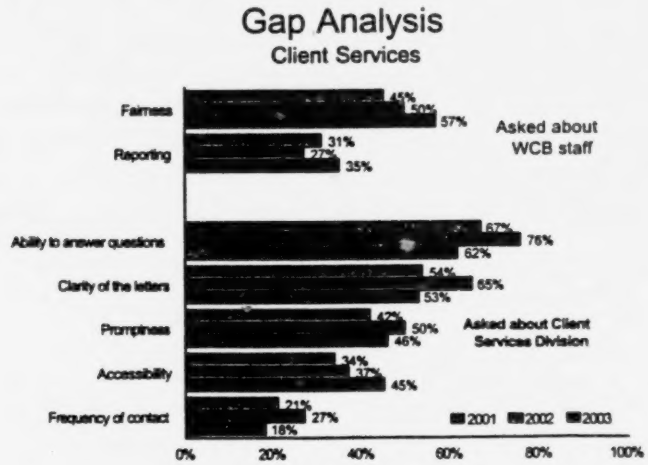
Comparing ratings of the Client Services Division (Worker Services Division in Newfoundland and Labrador) across provincial workers' compensation organizations, it is evident that employers in Nova Scotia continue to report a higher level of satisfaction on all factors relating to Client Services staff than do employers in Newfoundland and Labrador.

Employers who were less than mostly satisfied with the accessibility of WCB Client Services staff were asked why they felt this way. The primary reasons for this lack of satisfaction include the perception that staff members are difficult to reach (31%), or they do not like voice mail (31%) and there is too much running around and a lack of knowledge (30%). No other specific rationale for dissatisfaction was provided by more than eight percent. (6.1.1.1)

Gap Analysis – Client Services

There has been considerable improvement in most aspects of the Client Services Division.

As was the case concerning the Assessment Services staff, a gap analysis was also conducted for service factors pertaining to the Client Services Division. Again, it is important to note two of the items, fairness and reporting, were not specifically posed concerning Client Services staff. Rather, they were asked in regards to the WCB overall. It was decided, however, to include these two items in this section, as well as the Assessment Services staff section, for the purposes of comparison.



Compared with the gap analysis conducted in 2002 and with the exception of accessibility, there has been a decrease in gap scores across each area under evaluation. It is important to note while gap scores may vary from year over year, for each service dimension examined the Client Services Division satisfaction scores reported above indicate the majority of employers are at least "mostly satisfied" with the service provided to them.

Similar to results for the Assessment Services Division, the highest gap in performance for Client Services is the **ability to answer questions**, however, this is the performance area where the gap has dropped the most since 2002 (down 14 percentage points since 2002). Similarly, performance has improved in terms of **clarity of letters** (down 12 percentage points), **frequency of contact** (down 9 percentage points), and **promptness** (down 4 percentage points). The only area where an increase has occurred is in **accessibility** (up 8 percentage points). Indeed, close to one-half of employers believe is critically important, but are less than completely satisfied with the accessibility of the Client Services Division's staff.

General Effectiveness of Client Services Staff

Client Services staff continue to be perceived positively by employers in terms of treating them with respect and case knowledge.

Employers were asked to rate Client Services staff on a series of service-related statements, and results reveal employers generally regard the WCB positively, particularly concerning the WCB staff treating employers with respect and the level of knowledge caseworkers have about employers' cases and/or claims. (Tables 6.3.1, 4-5)

The following table illustrates employers' perceptions concerning the general effectiveness of Client Services staff.

General Effectiveness of Client Services Staff

	Completely/ Mostly Agree %			Mostly/ Completely Disagree %		
	2001	2002	2003	2001	2002	2003
Staff in the Client Services Division treated me with respect	89	93	88	2	0	3
My caseworker knows all about my workers' cases or claims	75	75	70	7	6	8
I am involved in the decision-making and planning on my workers' claims/cases	56	60	59	33	30	27

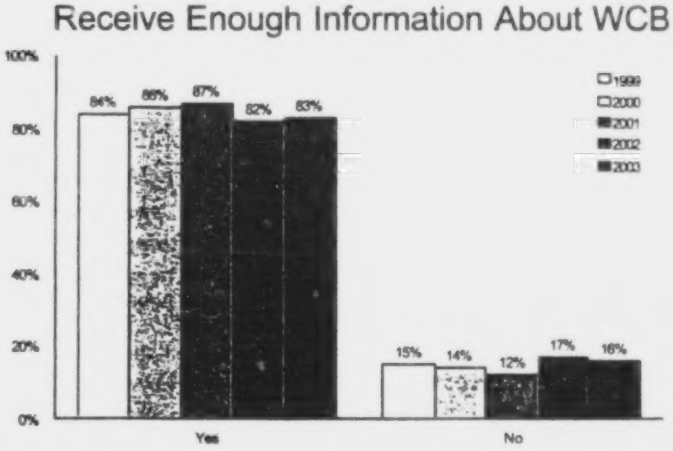
Consistent with 2002 results, close to nine in ten employers rate Client Services staff positively in terms of **being treated with respect** In addition, seven in ten agree their **caseworker knows all about their workers' cases or claims**, down somewhat compared with 2002. Employers continue to be less likely to agree they **are involved in the decision-making and planning on their workers' claims/cases**, with six in ten continuing to express agreement.

General Attitudes Towards WCB Communications

Amount of Information about the WCB

In keeping with findings from recent years, most employers continue to state they receive sufficient information about the WCB.

Consistent with 2002, the majority of employers (83%) say they currently receive adequate information about the WCB and its activities. In contrast, less than two in ten (16%) feel they receive sufficient information. While there were minimal demographic differences, employers who have filed an accident report late (75%) and those with payroll four times a month (73%) are less likely to believe they currently receive enough information about the WCB. (Table 7.1.1)



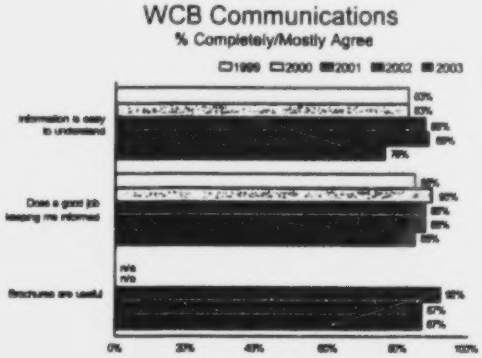
Employers who say they did not receive adequate information about the WCB and its activities were asked to identify additional information they would like to receive. Among these employers, the most common request was for more general information (72%), followed distantly by information on how the WCB operates (36%), information on entitlements, rights, or benefits (23%), information about changes (23%), claims processing procedures (20%), and how pay rates are determined (18%). No other specific suggestion was offered by more than six percent of those surveyed. (Table 7.1.2)

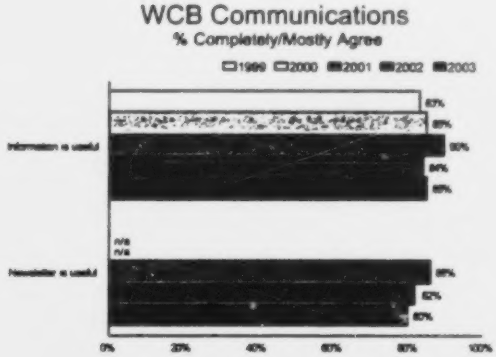
Effectiveness of Information Provided by the WCB

WCB communications continues to be rated very positively by employers.

Employers were asked to rate the WCB in terms of its communication with them. Results show that employers continue to offer a very positive evaluation of the WCB, and are consistent with the findings of 2002.

Close to nine in ten employers continue to either completely or mostly agree the WCB performs well with respect to **keeping them informed about important changes**, while just over one in ten disagree with this statement. Employers who have been late filing an accident report (74%) as well as those with payroll four times a month (77%) are less likely to agree the WCB does a good job keeping them informed about important changes. (Table 7.3.1)





Again, eight in ten of those surveyed offer a positive evaluation of the WCB in terms of **providing information that is easy to understand**, while just over one in ten employers disagree with this statement. This finding is consistent with that observed in 2002. Satisfaction with the WCB is fairly consistent across the employer population, with the exception of employers who have had a late payment premium (82%) and those with monthly pay roll (84%) being less likely than others to agree the WCB provides information that is easy to understand. (Table 7.3.2)

More than eight in ten employers agree the information provided by the WCB is **useful to them**, which is in keeping with 2002 findings. Just over one in ten disagree the information provided to them is useful. Across the population, those most likely to agree that the information is useful include those who have filed a claims appeal (93%) and employers with payroll four times a month (95%). In contrast, those less inclined to agree include employers in the Halifax area (79%), along with of employers who have filed an assessment appeal (78%), and those with a monthly payroll (84%). (Table 7.3.3)

In terms of the **usefulness of information in WCB brochures**, close to nine in ten employers continue to perceive this information to be useful, while one in ten do not. Employers who have filed a claims appeal are more likely to agree the information in WCB brochures is useful (93%), whereas those who have been late filing an accident report are less likely to agree (77%). (Table 7.3.4)

Finally, just over eight in ten employers agree the **WCB newsletter "Inside Workers' Compensation" provides useful information**, while one in ten do not. Employers who have been late reporting an accident (57%), along with those in the Halifax area (74%), are least likely to agree the newsletter provides useful information. (Table 7.3.5)

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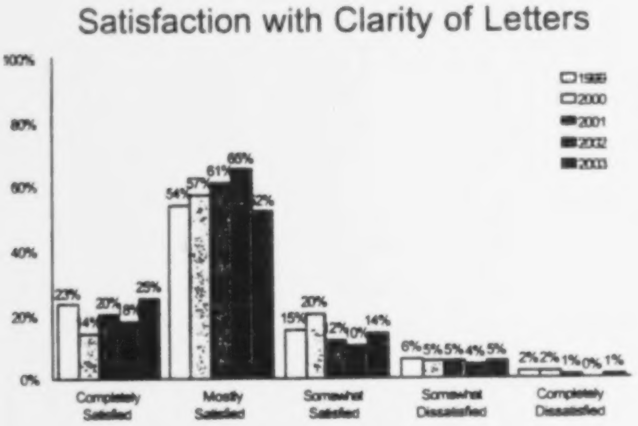
Clarity of Letters

Satisfaction remains high with the clarity of letters from the WCB.

Employers were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the clarity of letters received from the WCB. Consistent with last year's findings, eight in ten employers are mostly or completely satisfied with the clarity of letters received, while few are dissatisfied. In addition, just over one in ten state they are only somewhat satisfied with the clarity. (Table 7.4)

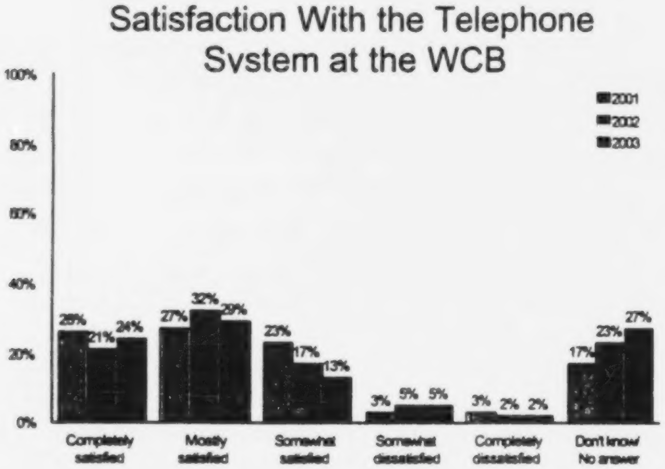


Across the province, employers located in Cape Breton (68%), those with monthly payrolls (75%), along with those who have been late filing an accident report (69%), or have been late paying their premiums (73%), are less likely than others to express satisfaction with the clarity of letters from the WCB.

Satisfaction with the Telephone System

Half of employers continue to express satisfaction with the WCB's telephone system.

In 2001, a new question was incorporated into the study, asking employers to assess the WCB telephone system. Overall, one-half continue to be satisfied with the telephone system, while just over one in ten are only 'somewhat' satisfied. While only seven percent report being dissatisfied, it is important to note that as in 2002, the percentage of employers who do not offer an opinion remains high, with close to three in ten (27%, up 4 percentage points since 2002) not providing a definite response. (Table 1.8.1)



Those most likely to assess the WCB positively in terms of its telephone system include employers located in Cape Breton (59%), large businesses (59%), and who have filed an assessment appeal (65%).

Assessment Payment Plan

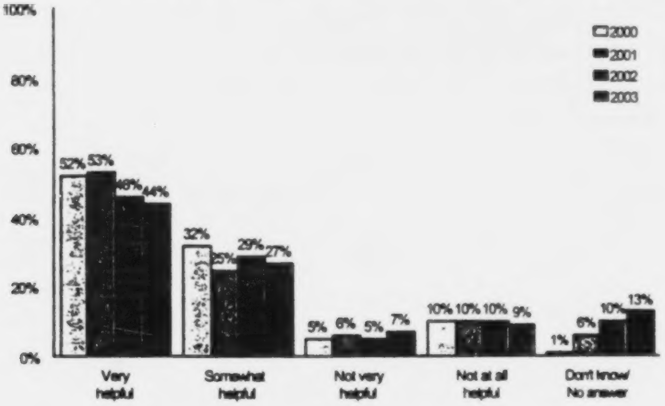
WCB's Assessment Payment Plan continues to be perceived in a favourable manner.

Helpfulness of Assessment Payment Plan

Employers were asked to rate the extent to which the Assessment Payment Plan is helpful to their company. Close to one-half still consider the payment plan to be very helpful, while just over one-quarter consider it to be somewhat helpful. In addition, close to two in ten rate the payment plan as either not very or not at all helpful.

In addition, just over one in ten of those surveyed do not offer an opinion regarding the helpfulness of the Assessment Payment Plan. Employers with quarterly payrolls (90%) are most apt to find the Assessment Payment Plan helpful, while those who have filed an assessment appeal (47%) were least likely to find the plan of value. (Table 8.2)

Helpfulness of Assessment Payment Plan

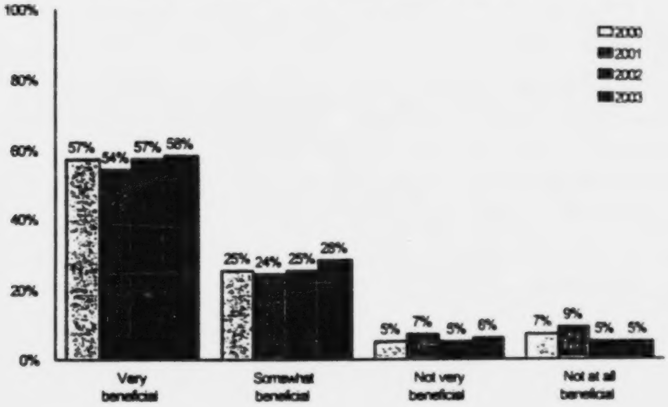


Payroll Issues

Consistent with 2002, submitting payments at the same time as their CCRA payments is regarded as a major benefit, and the majority continue to prefer to submit payroll reports on a monthly basis.

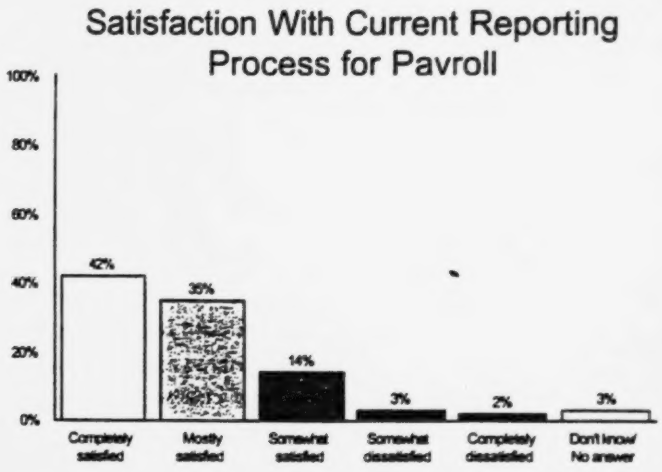
Employers were asked "**To what extent, if at all, do you find it beneficial to submit your payments at the same time as those you submit to CCRA/Revenue Canada?**" Overall, more than eight in ten employers find the ability to submit payments at the same time payments are made to CCRA to be somewhat (28%) or very (58%) beneficial. In contrast, one in ten employers do not consider this option to be beneficial, while four percent do not offer a definite opinion. (Table 8.3)

Benefit of Submitting Payments at Same Time as Payroll Reporting to CCRA



While there are variations of opinion observed across the various employer subgroups, these are due primarily to differences in the number of employers who do not offer an opinion. Those more likely to not offer an opinion include employers with payroll four times a month (28%), employers who have been late filing an accident report (19%), employers with at least one claim (14%), large businesses (13%), and those who have appealed a claim (11%).

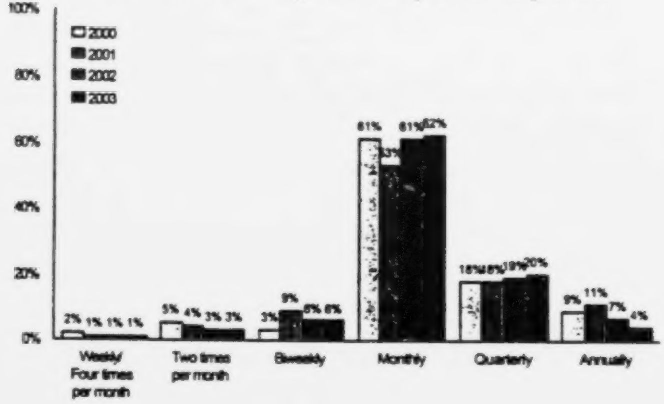
An additional question was added to the 2003 survey, which assesses employer satisfaction with the reporting process for payroll. Overall, just over three-quarters are mostly (35%) or completely (42%) satisfied with their current reporting process, while just over one in ten are somewhat satisfied (14%). The remainder are dissatisfied (5%) or were unable to provide a definite response to this question (3%). (Table 8.4.1)



Certain demographic differences should be highlighted. Specifically, employers who have filed an assessment appeal (83%), small businesses (79%), and those who have had no claims (78%), and those who report their payroll less frequently (monthly 78%, quarterly 79%), are more likely to express satisfaction with their payroll reporting process. In contrast, those who have been late filing an accident report (65%) are less likely to express satisfaction in this area.

Employers were also asked to identify their preferred frequency for reporting payroll. Six in ten employers prefer to report their payroll on a monthly basis, which is in keeping with the 2002 findings. Similarly, two in ten continue to prefer quarterly reports, while close to one in ten prefer either weekly, twice a month or bi-weekly reports. (Table 8.4.3)

Preferred Payroll Reports Option



Across the population, large businesses (46%) are less likely than small businesses (65%), and employers with no claims history (63%) are more likely than those with a claims history (53%), to favour monthly payroll reporting. Similarly, employers in Cape Breton (87%) are more likely as well, as are those who have appealed an assessment (74%) or who have had an ER Merit (70%). Not surprisingly, employers who currently use monthly payroll reporting (71%) are considerably more likely than others to prefer monthly reporting, whereas those who use quarterly reporting (55%) are more apt to show a higher affinity towards quarterly reporting.

Employers were also asked whether they find it difficult to meet payroll-reporting deadlines. Eight in ten (unchanged compared with 2002) do not find it difficult to meet these deadlines, while just over one in ten (stable compared with 2002) experience difficulties. Those most likely to report difficulties in meeting payroll deadlines include those who have filed an assessment appeal (37%), employers in the Central/North Shore area (25%), small businesses (16%) and those with either monthly (17%) or four times a month (11%) payrolls. (Table 8.4.4)

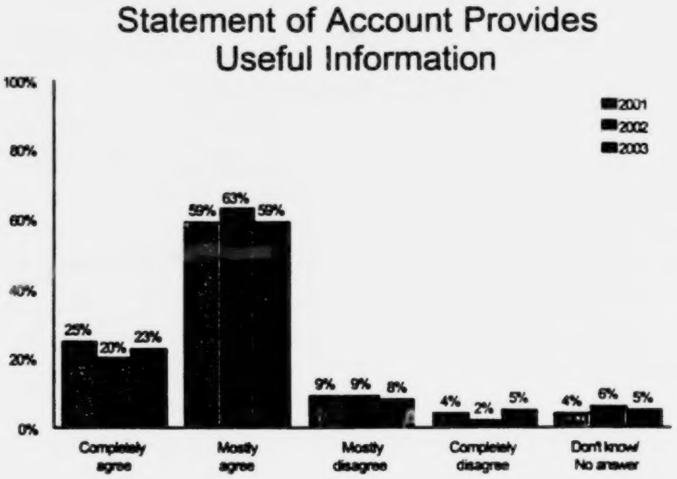
Of interest, employers in the Newfoundland and Labrador area continue to offer very different opinions than those in Nova Scotia with respect to preferred payroll reporting. In Newfoundland and Labrador, there remains a clear preference among employers for annual reporting of payroll to the Commission, with minority support for quarterly reporting. In contrast, employers in Nova Scotia continue to exhibit a strong preference for monthly reporting, with only minimal support for quarterly reporting and very little support for annual reporting. The variation in preferences among employers in the two provinces is likely reflective of the different reporting requirements within the two jurisdictions. To that end, it is noteworthy that the vast majority of employers in each jurisdiction reports little difficulty in meeting payroll reporting deadlines.

Statement of Account

The Statement of Account to continues to be both easy to understand and useful, and is found to be accurate.

When asked about the level of ease of understanding the Statement of Account, three-quarters of employers continue to assess it as somewhat (35%) or very (45%) easy to understand, with just under one in ten indicating it is difficult to understand. One in ten consider the Statement of Account to be neither difficult nor easy to understand. In terms of specific employer subgroups, employers with quarterly payrolls (89%), employers in the South Shore Valley region (89%), small businesses (82%), those with an ER demerit (82%), and those with no claims history (80%) are more likely to say the Statement of Account is easy to understand. (Table 8.5.1)

In addition, employers were asked to assess whether or not the Statement of Account provides useful information. More than eight in ten employers mostly or completely agree the Statement of Account provides useful information, stable compared with 2002 results. Just over one in ten do not agree the Statement of Account provides useful information. Small businesses (83%) are more likely to believe the Statement of Account provides useful information. In contrast, those who have appealed a claim (76%), those have filed an assessment appeal (76%) and employers with payroll four times a month (77%) are less likely to find the information provided useful. (Table 8.5.2)


Statement of Account Provides Useful Information

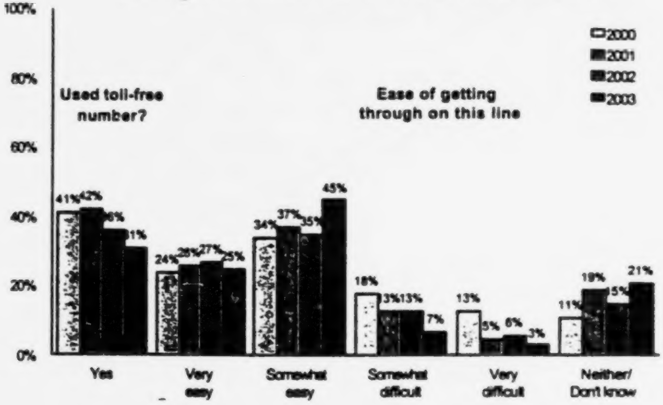
Employers were also asked whether the information they submit during the month matches the information on their monthly Statement of Account. Nine in ten employers state the information does indeed match, which represents an increase of six percentage points from 2002. Only four percent report that this information does not match, while seven percent are unable to provide a definite answer. These results are consistent across the employer population. (Table 8.5.3)

APP Toll-free Line

Use of the 1-877 telephone number that allows employers to ask questions about the Assessment Payment Plan has been declining since 2001. However, those who use the line say it is easy to get through to the WCB using this telephone number.

Employers were asked if they had contacted the WCB via the 1-877 telephone number available for companies that have questions concerning the WCB's Assessment Payment Plan. Use of this telephone service has been declining since 2001. More specifically, three in ten of those surveyed in 2003 report having used the system, compared with close to four in ten in 2002. (Table 8.6.1)

Usage of the APP Toll-free Line



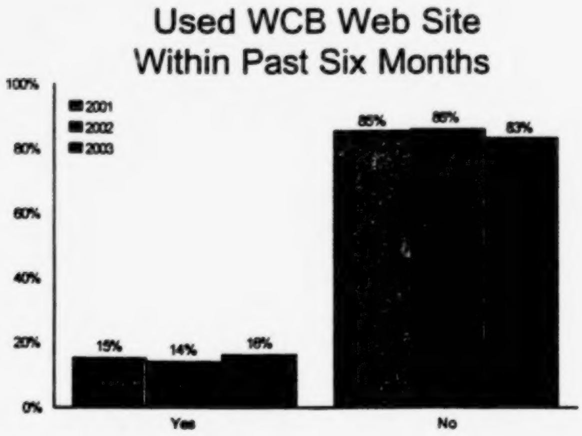
Those most likely to have used the APP telephone number include employers who have been late filing an accident report (61%), those with payroll twice a month (47%), and employers located in the Central/North Shore (43%). Large and small businesses are equally likely to have used this telephone service. In addition, usage of the toll-free line for inquiries is slightly higher among Nova Scotia employers than it is for a similar toll-free line established in Newfoundland and Labrador for employers in that province who have inquiries.

Those employers who have used the telephone number for questions related to the WCB Assessment Payment Plan were asked to rate the level of difficulty in getting through on this telephone line. Seven in ten of these employers consider it to be somewhat (45%) or very (25%) easy to get through to the WCB using this telephone number, which represents an increase of eight percentage points since 2002. (Table 8.6.2)

WCB Website

Usage of the WCB website continues to be very low.

In 2001, a question was asked to assess employer use of the WCB website. Use of the website continues to be low, with fewer than two in ten employers indicating they have utilized the WCB website in the past six months. Large businesses (34%) are more likely than small businesses (12%), and employers with at least one claim (29%) are more likely than those with no claims history (15%), to have used the website in the past six months. In addition, employers who have with late accident reports (49%) and those with payroll four times a month (45%) are more likely than others to have utilized the website. Usage of the WCB website among Nova Scotia employers in the past six months is on par with the level of usage at any point in the past, as reported by employers in Newfoundland and Labrador for the WHSCC website. (Table 8.6.3)

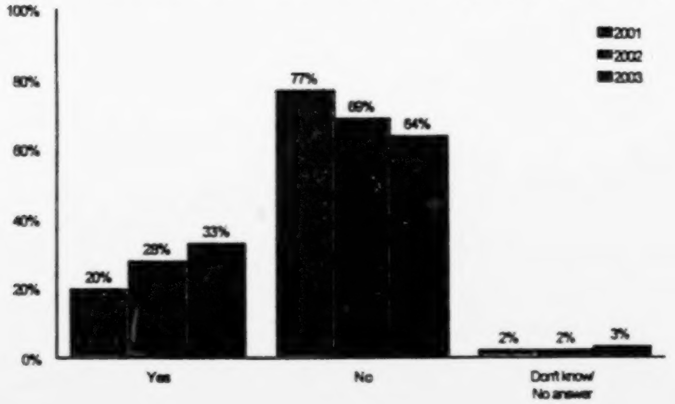


Awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry

Awareness of the Nova Scotia Business Registry is steadily increasing.

Employers were also asked if they had heard or seen anything about the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR). Awareness of the NSBR is starting to increase from the level recorded in 2001, with one-third of employers claiming awareness this year (up five percentage points since 2002). Awareness of the NSBR is highest among large businesses (42%), employers in the Central/North Shore area (42%), employers who have frequent payroll methods (twice a month 43%, four times a month 38%), and those who have filed a claims appeal (39%). (Table 8.6.4)

Heard or Seen Anything About the Nova Scotia Business Registry (NSBR)

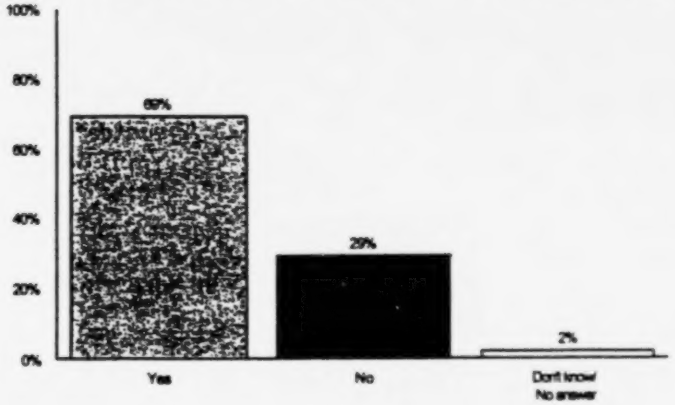


Awareness of Advertising Campaign

Recall of the recent advertising campaign was relatively high among Nova Scotian employers.

In fourth quarter 2003, a series of questions were included in the survey to assess employers' awareness of a recent advertising campaign pertaining to workplace safety. Overall, seven in ten employers recall hearing or seeing advertising about workplace safety in the past two months. In contrast, three in ten were unable to recall such advertising. (Table 4.5.2)

Heard or Seen Any Advertising in Past Two Months About Workplace Safety

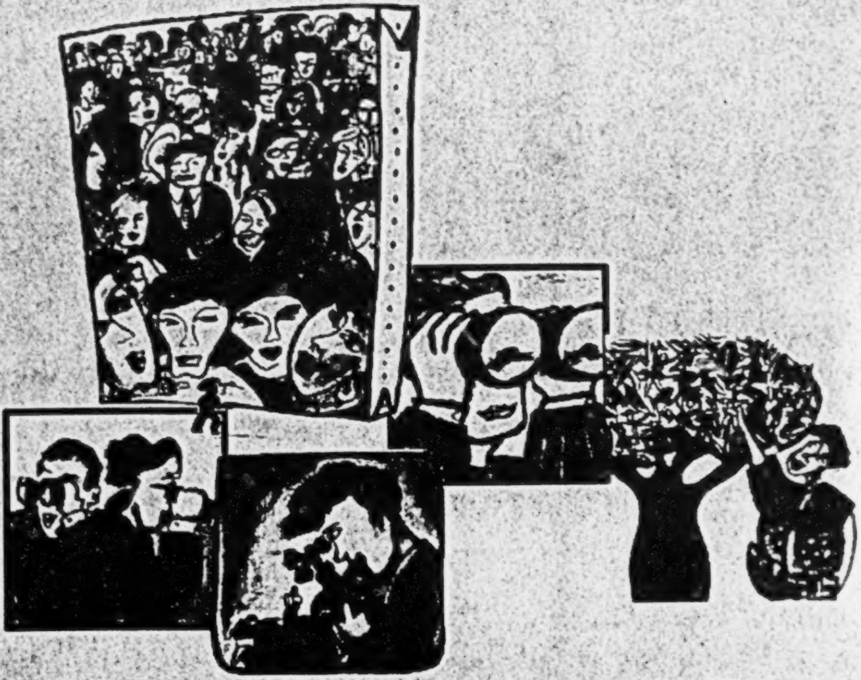


Across the employer group, those most likely to recall seeing such advertising include employers who have appealed an assessment (90%), those with quarterly payroll (84%), employers in Cape Breton (83%) and Central/North Shore (81%), as well as larger businesses (70%).

Employers who recalled seeing this advertising were asked to recount what this advertising was about. While one-third indicated that it pertained to workplace safety and safety awareness, it is important to note that another one-third was unable to provide a definite response to this question. Despite this finding, another two in ten reported that the advertising had to do with young worker safety. No other specific response was provided by more than six percent. (Table 4.5.3)

For the most part, those employers who recalled seeing this advertising campaign felt that it was effective in explaining the message of workplace safety, with more than eight in ten describing the campaign as effective. (Table 4.5.4)

Finally, employers where asked where they saw this advertising. Overall, television was the most frequently identified medium, with four in ten recalling seeing a television add. Television was distantly followed by hearing an ad on the radio (24%), seeing it in the newspaper (23%), or receiving a direct mail piece (18%). No other specific communication medium was identified by more that four percent. (Table 4.5.5)



2003 Injured Worker Survey

Final Report

WORKERS'
COMPENSATION
BOARD of NOVA SCOTIA

CORPORATE RESEARCH
ASSOCIATES INC

2003 Injured Worker Survey

Final Report

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Introduction

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia was established in 1917 to provide financial benefits and rehabilitation services to injured workers in the province. In the past several years, the workers' compensation system was significantly overhauled to improve the efficiency and effectiveness with which these services are provided. As part of these changes, the WCB established corporate performance measures to provide organizational focus and long-term measurable targets consistent with the organization's vision, mission, and values. Corporate performance is now being evaluated using internal and external measures, including annual surveys with the organization's most important stakeholders consisting of employers, WCB employees, and clients.

In 1997, an initial pilot survey was conducted with injured workers to identify how changes in the system are affecting clients and to establish initial benchmarks for measuring corporate performance. In 1998, the WCB decided to redesign the injured worker survey to provide more precise measurements of client satisfaction and establish new corporate benchmarks that will guide the organization into the future. In 1999 and 2000, some questions were amended so as to make the survey more comparable with those conducted with WCB-registered employers. In 2001, 2002, and 2003 consultations between CRA and WCB staff resulted in a small number of question deletions and additions to the survey instrument.

The purpose of the 2003 survey once again is to evaluate the service performance of the WCB from the perspective of one of its key client groups - injured workers across Nova Scotia. More specifically, this study is intended to:

- Track performance in key areas of service since 1997;

- Evaluate service performance across key client subgroups, including region and length of claim;

- Identify changes in performance since 1997 where comparable data are available; and

- Provide strategic direction to the WCB in terms of service delivery and communications.

This study was based on telephone interviews with a representative sample of 1,508 injured workers who had received WCB compensation benefits. The sample consisted of 1,508 workers drawn from the general client population from all areas of the province, as well as 293 Extended Benefit Unit (EBU) claimants. The survey was conducted on a monthly basis over the course of 2003 and data were combined to produce overall year to date results.

The results from a sample of 1,508 drawn from the general client population would be expected to provide results accurate to within ±2.5 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level). The sample of 293 clients from the EBU population would be expected to provide results accurate to within ±5.6 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level). EBU claimants who had requested and received a decision on their claim in the past month were eligible to be surveyed. Concerning the general population, clients who had received a temporary benefit cheque in the previous month were eligible to be surveyed.

This report begins with an executive summary, followed by key conclusions and recommendations provided for the WCB's consideration. The body of the report contains a detailed analysis of the survey findings, including comparisons with surveys from past years on key "benchmark" questions. Because the 1997 survey utilized different measurement scales, these data have been recalibrated to provide a basis for comparisons with the 1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and current results. While these comparisons are valid, they should be treated with caution since different scales could have affected how clients responded to the questions. A more complete description of the methodology used to conduct this survey is provided at the back of this report.

Appended is a copy of the survey questionnaire (Appendix A), as well as comprehensive banner tables (Appendix B). These tables present the results for each question by key client subgroups (e.g. region, length of claim). These tables are noted in the report for easy reference. Unless otherwise stated, all results in this report are expressed as a percentage.

For purposes of comparison, data in this report occasionally are described in relation to those from similar studies of injured workers in other jurisdictions within Atlantic Canada. Specifically, results will be compared with a 2003 study of injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador who offered opinions of the Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WHSCC), and a 2002 study of injured workers on Prince Edward Island who offered opinions of the Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island (WCB-PEI). Such comparisons are made only at a high level (i.e., no specific figures are included), and only when questions in the two studies are deemed to be of sufficient similarity to warrant such a comparison.

Executive Summary

Results from the **2003 Injured Worker Survey** demonstrate that the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia is continuing to service its clients in a positive way. In general, ratings for the WCB have remained either stable or shown some improvement since 2002, and no major problem areas have been identified. However, such a favourable review does not mean that the WCB should become complacent. Indeed, there area areas where the WCB should focus its energies to further enhance the level of service it provides to its client base.

Consistent with the 2002 findings, the WCB is still performing as well as or better than many private sector organizations, based on CRA's experience in this regard. As well, three-quarters of clients are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall experience with the WCB, which is consistent with the findings of both the 2001 and 2002 surveys. It is also important to note that the overwhelming majority of clients continue to consider the WCB to be effective in its provision of service.

Despite these positive client evaluations across a diverse spectrum of service and staff elements, the gap analysis performed highlights four areas where the WCB could potentially improve client perceptions of the organization. These areas include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of staff, and ability to answer questions. In improving these perceptions, it is important that the Workers' Compensation Board continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident.

Nonetheless, the findings of this study illustrate that the majority of WCB clients are either mostly or completely satisfied with the promptness of their cheque delivery, but there continues to remain a significant minority who are somewhat less satisfied with this critically important aspect of client service.

Overall, clients are pleased with the amount of information they have received from the WCB, and most are of the impression that this information is both useful and easy to understand. CRA's analysis suggests that fulfilling client information needs is an important facet of providing overall client service, and in this regard the WCB generally is performing quite well.

Among the Extended Benefits Unit (EBU) claimants, there have been notable improvements in satisfaction across all performance areas over the past two years. However, despite these improvements, this sub-group of injured workers continue to be less likely than the general injured worker population to offer a positive assessment of the WCB.

Key Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the findings of this research:

- **The percentage of injured workers who report satisfaction with their overall WCB experience continues to remain high.**

  It is evident that the majority of injured workers continue to have a favourable impression of the WCB, with three-quarters of clients indicating that they are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall WCB experience. While there has been a steady increase since 1998 with respect to percentage of clients who indicate they are completely satisfied with the WCB, it appears that this increase is starting to level off. Across the client population, clients from the Halifax area, high-risk claims, EBU claimants and those that have filed an appeal are less likely to be satisfied with their overall WCB experience.

  As a justification of this high level of satisfaction with the WCB, relatively few injured workers identify any single area where they feel the WCB needs to improve the level of service provided to injured workers. As well, the overwhelming majority consider the WCB to be effective in its provision of service, consistent with opinions regarding their overall experience, with more than nine in ten clients holding such an opinion. Again, like the trend observed with overall satisfaction with the WCB, it appears that after experiencing a steady growth since 1999, the proportion of clients that consider the WCB to be very effective is beginning to level off.

- **Overall, clients continue to exhibit moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of a range of service elements, with satisfaction improving in several areas.**

  As in previous years, most clients consider each of the service elements examined to be important in their evaluation of the WCB. Nonetheless, consistent with previous surveys, injured workers continue to be are most likely to consider fairness, claim outcome, and length of time to receive their first benefit cheque to be of critically importance. Relative to the four service elements previously referenced, there are three areas where there has been an increase in importance observed. Threes three areas include accessibility of staff, staff promptness, and clarity of letters.

  At least seven in ten injured workers express satisfaction with the WCB's performance on each service element, which is in keeping with the results observed in 2002. Improvement in satisfaction levels were noted with respect to politeness of staff, clarity of letters, promptness, brochure clarity, and the staff's ability to answer questions.

  A gap analysis, which weights satisfaction by importance, identified four priority areas for the WCB to improve injured workers' perceptions of the organization: length of time to receive the first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of WCB staff, and the WCB's ability to answer questions. With respect to each of these areas, at least three in ten clients consider the service element to be critically important, but are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance.

- **In keeping with the findings of 2002, injured workers continue to provide an extremely positive evaluation of WCB staff.**

In 2002, at least eight in ten clients are satisfied with WCB staff across a variety of service elements, with the only exception being clients' perceived involvement in making decisions that affect their case, where seven in ten clients are satisfied. These ratings of WCB staff are relatively unchanged when compared with the 2002 results.

Across the client population, clients who have filed an appeal, and EBU claimants continue to be more critical than others in their assessment of WCB staff. In addition, medium-risk clients are more inclined than high-risk clients to rate WCB staff favourably.

- **Injured workers continue to expect initial compensation within two weeks, and most continue to be satisfied with the time it took to receive their first cheque.**

In evaluating the benefits provided by WCB, not surprisingly, the amount of time it takes to receive the first benefit cheque continues to be a very important criterion, with close to eight in ten indicating that the first benefit cheque should be delivered to an injured worker within two weeks of an accident. This is an area where client expectation has increased slightly year over year. Given the emphasis clients place on this aspect of service delivery, the WCB should continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident. It is important to note that while the majority of clients are mostly or completely satisfied with the promptness of their cheque delivery, there is still a sizable minority who are less satisfied with this critically important aspect of service.

- **Following a significant improvement in 2001 satisfaction with WCB communications has remained stable over the past two years.**

In general, seven in ten clients continue to be satisfied with the amount of information they receive from the WCB, which is consistent with last year's results. However, clients who have filed an appeal, EBU clients, along with high-risk clients tend to be less likely than others to consider themselves to be well informed. In contrast, clients from the South Shore/Valley region are most likely to feel they receive sufficient information from the WCB.

At least eight in ten clients assess the WCB positively in terms of providing useful information that is easy to understand, and keeping clients informed. As in previous years, clients that have filed an appeal, and EBU claimants continue to are more likely than others to assess the WCB negatively with respect to these communications activities.

- **Consistent with the previous year's findings, the overwhelming majority of injured workers contacted the WCB for assistance during the past year, with many perceiving this contact is being effective in addressing their concerns.**

Within the past year, more than eight in ten clients contacted the WCB for some reason or another. These findings are consistent year over year. Overall, the overwhelming majority of these clients report that they were able to achieve what they set out to accomplish from this contact. However, across the demographics, it is interesting to note that clients who have filed an appeal are less likely to indicate that they were successful in this regard.

- **The levels of satisfaction expressed by low-risk claims clients are in keeping with those of the larger injured worker population and, overall, satisfaction with most service among low-risk claimants has remained stable year over year.**

The majority of low-risk claimants continue to express satisfaction with their WCB experience as well as the specific service areas. For the most part, satisfaction levels have remained stable across the specific service areas under investigation. Nonetheless, length of time it took to get the first benefits cheque continues to be an issue for low-risk clients, relative to other clients.

- **Although EBU claimants continue to be less likely than other clients to rate the WCB in a favourable manner, significant improvements in satisfaction levels with the WCB have been noted in most areas for the past two consecutive years.**

Taken together, the findings from the 2002 and 2003 surveys demonstrate that significant improvements have been achieved in terms of EBU claimant satisfaction with the WCB in all areas, including accessibility, promptness, ability to answer questions, frequency of contact, clarity of letters, claim outcome, brochure clarity, overall WCB experience, and, to a lesser extent, politeness. While these improvements are notable, it is important to keep in mind that EBU claimants continue to offer a considerably less positive evaluation of the WCB relative to the overall injured worker population.

Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendation is presented to the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia for its consideration:

> **Recommendation: The WCB should "stay the course" with current internal service-related initiatives, as such measures clearly have been effective in promoting steady improvement in the effectiveness and performance of the organization.**
>
> Results from the 2003 study once again indicate the WCB for the most part is performing well in the eyes of one of its key stakeholder groups, namely injured workers. As in any organization, there are areas that readily can be identified as presenting an opportunity for improved performance, but for the most part the WCB is widely-regarded by injured workers as meeting or, presumably in some cases, exceeding expectations. For the organization to "stay the course" in pursuing ongoing performance enhancements appears the proper path to follow, as it is evident the WCB has considerable success in effecting positive change internally.
>
> Nonetheless, as suggested some areas perhaps are deserving of particular attention in terms of remedial measures. For example, there continues to be an opportunity for the WCB to enhance communications to injured workers. Currently, a notable minority of clients report the WCB does not provide them with sufficient information. In addition, a gap analysis identified clarity of letters as well as the ability to answer questions as albeit small but important opportunity areas on which the WCB could focus resources.
>
> In addition, despite generally positive client evaluations across an array of service and staff factors, CRA's gap analysis highlights four areas where the WCB could potentially improve client perceptions of the organization. These areas include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of staff, and, as noted, ability to answer questions. In improving these perceptions, it is important that the Workers' Compensation Board continue to work towards streamlining its claims process, and ensure clients continue to receive their first compensation cheque within two weeks of their workplace accident.

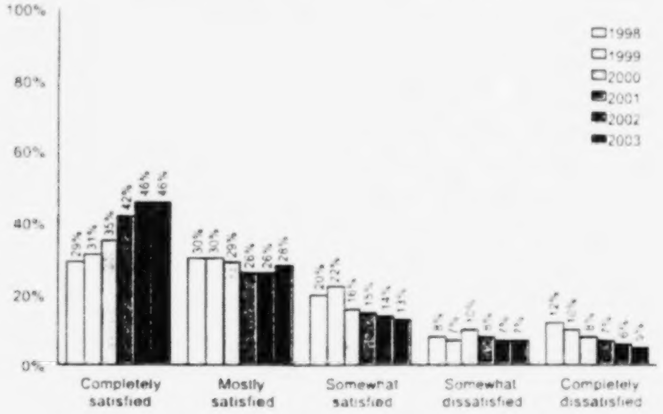
Detailed Analysis

Overall WCB Experience

The percentage of injured workers who report satisfaction with their overall WCB experience continues to remain high.

In 2003, three-quarter of clients indicate that they are completely or mostly satisfied with their overall experience with the WCB, which is in keeping with that observed in 2002. Just over one in ten are dissatisfied, while a similar percentage indicates they are only somewhat satisfied with their overall experience. (Table 1.5)

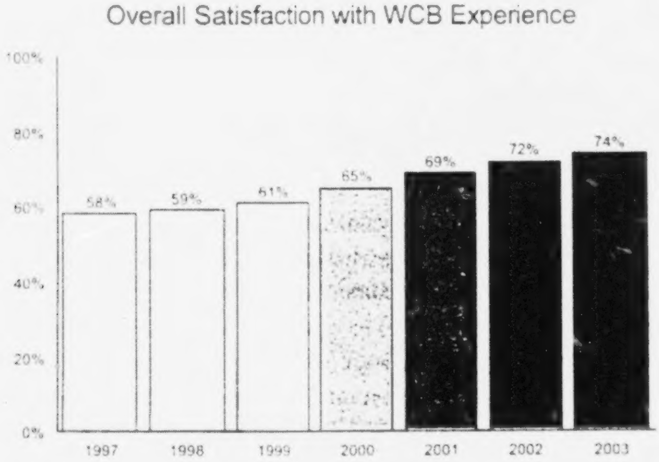
Overall Satisfaction with WCB Experience



There is some variation among injured workers in terms of overall satisfaction with their overall WCB experience. More specifically, the percentage of clients who are completely or mostly satisfied continues to be moderately lower among those in the Halifax Region ISU (72%), although satisfaction with the WCB has increased among this group of clients over the past two years. Medium-risk clients (79%) continue to be more likely than high-risk clients (67%) to be satisfied with their experience.

Not surprisingly, injured workers who have filed an appeal tend to be considerably more likely than other clients to be dissatisfied with their overall experience with the WCB. Among this client group, close to one-half are somewhat (16%) or completely (30%) dissatisfied, compared with only one-third who indicate they are mostly (22%) or completely (11%) satisfied. A further two in ten (22%) are only somewhat satisfied with their WCB experience. These findings are consistent with those observed in 2002. As well, EBU claimants are more likely to express dissatisfaction with their overall WCB experience (11% somewhat, 14% completely dissatisfied), however there has been a decline in dissatisfaction (down 9 percentage points) among this group year over year. Provincially, injured workers in Nova Scotia offer the most positive ratings with respect to their workers' compensation experience, while injured workers on Prince Edward Island express somewhat lower levels of satisfaction. In comparison, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador continue to be least satisfied with their overall workers' compensation experience.

In terms of results from the past six years, there continues to be an upward trend in client satisfaction, with current satisfaction with the WCB being at its highest recorded level.


Overall Satisfaction with WCB Experience

In order to better understand the reasons behind clients' evaluation of their overall WCB experience, respondents were asked why they are satisfied or dissatisfied. Among those injured workers who are either mostly or completely satisfied (n=1,121), the most common response is an absence of problems (45%, compared with 41% in 2002), followed by helpful staff (28%, compared with 27%), an assessment that they were provided with good service (25%, compared with 26%), and a commendation from many injured workers that they received a quick response to their claim (23%, compared with 24%). No other explanation was provided by more than 17 percent of those surveyed. (Table 1.6.a)

Among those clients who say they are either dissatisfied or are only somewhat satisfied with their WCB experience (n=382), several explanations are offered with no single reason emerging as a dominant issue. Clients express dissatisfaction because of how the claim was handled (20%, compared with 12% in 2002), the belief that it was difficult to reach staff (15%, compared with 12%), the perception they did not receive enough money (15%, compared with 13%), the length of time it took to process their claim (14%, compared with 16% in 2002), staff attitude (14%, compared with 15%), the fact that their claim was turned down or terminated (13%, compared with 10%), the belief that they did not receive adequate information (12%, compared with 11%), and the fact that they were dissatisfied with the claim outcome (12%, compared with 6%). No other reason is suggested by more than 10 percent of clients. (Table 1.6c)

Clients from the South Shore/Valley (22%) ISU are more likely than those from Central/North Shore (11%), Cape Breton (12%) or the Halifax Region ISU (16%) to cite difficulty in reaching staff as a reason for being less than mostly satisfied with their overall WCB experience. Not surprisingly, clients who filed an appeal (26%) were more likely than others to express dissatisfaction with how their claim was handled, as were high-risk clients (24%).

Client Evaluations of WCB Services

Overall, clients continue to exhibit moderate to high levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of a range of service elements, with satisfaction improving in several areas.

Importance of Service Factors

In the fourth quarter of 2003, injured workers were asked to assess how important various WCB service factors are in their overall evaluation of the service they receive from the WCB. Most consider each service factor to be important to their evaluation of the WCB. Three service factors continue to be regarded as critically important by the overwhelming majority of injured workers. These three factors are being treated fairly, the claim outcome, and the amount of time it takes to receive the first benefit cheque. Clients are less likely in 2003 to consider the accessibility of WCB staff (63%, up 12 points since 2002), the promptness of WCB staff (69%, up 10 points since 2002), as well as clarity of letters (73%, up 6 points) to be critically important, although the perceived importance of each has increased over the past year. With respect to the remaining service factors, the number of clients who consider each factor to be critically important has remained relatively stable since 2002. Across the provinces, most factors are considered to be critically important by a majority of injured workers, with fair treatment rated as the most important factor and frequency of contact rated as the least important. Of interest however, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador place greater importance on most factors assessed, compared with injured workers in Nova Scotia or on Prince Edward Island (Tables 1.4.1-9)[*]

Importance Of Service Factors

	Critically Important (%)		Important But Not Critical (%)	
	2002	**2003**	2002	**2003**
Fairness	87	**89**	13	**10**
Outcome of claim	84	**81**	15	**16**
Receipt of first benefit cheque	82	**81**	15	**16**
Clarity of letters	67	**73**	30	**25**
Ability to answer questions	71	**70**	24	**28**
Promptness	59	**69**	37	**29**
Politeness	62	**67**	33	**31**
Accessibility	51	**63**	42	**36**
Brochure clarity	60	**59**	31	**33**
Frequency of contact	40	**44**	52	**49**

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[*] This series of questions was only asked during the fourth quarter of 2003. In the fall of 2003, 382 clients were asked to rate the importance of these service factors, providing results accurate to within ±5.0 percentage points in 95 out of 100 samples (95% confidence level).

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Satisfaction with Staff Services

Injured workers were also asked to indicate their level of satisfaction across these same service aspects (with the exception of fairness and receipt of first benefit cheque). Consistent with 2002, at least seven in ten of those surveyed express satisfaction with the WCB on each service element, with clients expressing the highest levels of satisfaction with the WCB in terms of politeness of staff, clarity of letters received from the WCB, promptness, brochure clarity, and WCB staff's ability to answer questions. (Tables 1.4.10a-j, 1.2)

Comparisons with previous data suggest WCB performance has remained stable relative to that observed in 2002.

Satisfaction with Staff Services

	Completely or Mostly Satisfied						
	1997 %	1998 %	1999 %	2000 %	2001 %	2002 %	**2003 %**
Politeness	75	76	81	83	85	87	**86**
Clarity of letters	69	75	73	77	81	85	**85**
Promptness	n/a	n/a	70	72	77	80	**80**
Brochure clarity	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	83	76	**80**
Ability to answer questions	64	66	66	72	78	80	**79**
Accessibility	n/a	n/a	67	73	70	76	**75**
Frequency of contact	46	51	59	62	72	74	**75**
Outcome of claim	49	57	58	66	67	71	**72**
Receipt of first benefit cheque	45	54	57	54	67	72	n/a

Generally, clients from Cape Breton continue to be more likely than others to express satisfaction with the WCB across the majority of the service elements. Similarly, medium risk clients are also more apt to express satisfaction than high-risk clients on all the areas presented. In contrast, satisfaction across all service elements tends to be lowest among those who have filed an appeal.

Provincially, injured workers in Nova Scotia, PEI, and Newfoundland and Labrador are satisfied with the performance of their provincial workers' compensation organization on all service related factors assessed, particularly in terms of the politeness of staff and the clarity of letters received. Nevertheless, injured workers in Nova Scotia generally express a higher level of satisfaction with these service-related factors, compared with injured workers in the other two jurisdictions.

Gap Analysis

As noted, the Injured Worker Survey again this year asked a series of questions concerning WCB service in terms of perceived level of importance and overall client satisfaction. By collecting such ratings of importance and satisfaction it is possible to conduct a gap analysis. A gap analysis compares clients' expectations on a set of service factors with an organization's performance on those factors. The gap analysis represents the perceived difference between the injured workers' expectations and the service they actually received. Gap analysis assists in identifying the particular service aspects the WCB could focus upon to improve client perceptions of the organization. Gap scores are calculated as the percentage of clients who rate a factor as critically important and are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance on that factor. Higher gap scores indicate greater gaps between expectation and performance, and represent areas in which attention could be focused with an eye for service improvement.

Gap Analysis Calculation: Example

Politeness of WCB staff	Completely satisfied	Not completely satisfied	Total
Critically important	167	**89**	256
Not critically important	84	42	126
Total	251	131	**382**

A gap analysis was conducted for clients interviewed in October, November, and December 2003 (the three months during which the importance questions were included on the questionnaire). As illustrated in the preceding table, 256 clients rate the politeness of the WCB staff as a critically important aspect of service. Of those 256 clients, 89 are less than completely satisfied with the politeness of staff at the WCB. Thus, out of all 382 injured workers surveyed, 89 believe the politeness of WCB staff is of critical importance and are not completely satisfied with the politeness of the staff, producing a gap score of 89/382, or 23 percent. In other words, close to one-quarter of all clients are of the opinion both that staff politeness is a critically important factor and the WCB is not meeting their expectations in this regard.

For the most part the findings from the gap analysis are favourable and generally in keeping with results from 2002. Nonetheless, there has been a slight increase in the gap scores for **accessibility** (gap score of 27%, up 8 points form 2002) and **promptness of WCB staff** (32%, up 7 points). As such, these two areas should be monitored closely to ensure that these gaps do not continue to increase. The lowest gap scores are this year again observed in **frequency of contact, brochure clarity**, **promptness** and **clarity of letters**, and **accessibility**, all receiving gap scores of less than 30 percentage points. Such low gap scores represents areas of strength for the WCB and perhaps should not be considered high priority improvement areas for the organization. Based on CRA's experience, these findings are quite satisfactory, especially given the fact that gap scores tend to be higher for public-sector organizations compared with private-sector organizations. However, there are four areas identified as opportunities for the WCB to improve client perceptions of the organization. These include length of time to receive first benefit cheque, claim outcome, promptness of WCB staff to answer questions, and ability to answer questions.

Gap Analysis

	2002 %	2003 %
Receipt of first benefit cheque	43	**41**
Outcome of claim	38	**36**
Promptness	25	**32**
Ability to answer questions	28	**29**
Accessibility	19	**27**
Clarity of letters	29	**25**
Politeness	21	**23**
Brochure clarity	25	**23**
Frequency of contact	15	**20**

Similar to previous findings, **length of time to receive the first benefit cheque** is identified as the highest priority area for the WCB to improve client perceptions of the organization. More specifically, eight in ten injured workers consider this to be of critical importance. Among these clients, a large number are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance, resulting in a performance gap of 41 percent.

Claim outcome continues to be an area of some concern for the WCB, with eight in ten clients considering it to be critically important to their evaluation of the WCB. Among these clients, many are less than completely satisfied with the level of service they receive, with a gap score of 36 percent, which is in keeping with the gap score observed in 2002.

With respect to **promptness**, seven in ten clients say it is critically important in their evaluation of WCB. A gap score of 32 percent is calculated, which is up slightly (7 points) since 2002.

Finally, in terms of the WCB's **ability to answer questions**, seven in ten injured workers rate this aspect of service as critically important. Of these clients, a large number indicate they are less than completely satisfied with the WCB's performance, resulting in a gap score of 29 percentage points, which is consistent with the 2002 results.

Assessment of WCB Staff

In keeping with the findings of 2002, injured workers continue to provide an extremely positive evaluation of WCB staff.

The overall effectiveness of WCB staff in providing quality service is further reflected in how clients rate various aspects of service from WCB staff. With respect to each service aspect presented, clients continue to offer extremely favourable assessments of the WCB staff (Tables 2.1.1-10).

Clients continue to offer a particularly positive evaluation of WCB staff in terms of **being treated with respect**, being provided with a **clear understanding of benefits**, being **treated fairly**, and **being provided with a clear understanding of their case or claim**, with approximately nine in ten of those surveyed expressing satisfaction with WCB staff in each of these four areas. Similarly, at least eight in ten of those surveyed express satisfaction with the WCB staff with respect to their familiarity with their case, their flexibility in meeting their needs, their explanation of the compensation process, and having an understanding of their needs. Consistent with 2002 results, clients continue to be least likely to agree they are involved in making decisions that affect their case or claim, with seven in ten agreeing they are involved in these decisions.

General Effectiveness of WCB Staff

	Completely/ Mostly Agree %		Completely/ Mostly Disagree %	
	2002	**2003**	2002	**2003**
Being treated with respect	92	**93**	7	**6**
Entitlement – providing a clear understanding of benefits	88	**87**	10	**12**
Being treated fairly	88	**87**	11	**12**
Communication – providing clear understanding of case/claim	86	**87**	11	**12**
Familiarity with case	85	**85**	10	**12**
Flexible in meeting needs	81	**82**	14	**13**
Clearly explained compensation process	81	**81**	16	**17**
Understanding of needs	81	**81**	16	**16**
Involved in making decisions on case/claim	69	**70**	25	**26**

While responses are generally positive across the various client subgroups, it is interesting to note that those clients who have filed an appeal, as well as EBU claimants, continue to be somewhat more critical in their assessment of the WCB staff. In addition, medium-risk clients are more apt than their high-risk counterparts to provide a positive evaluation of WCB staff in this regard.

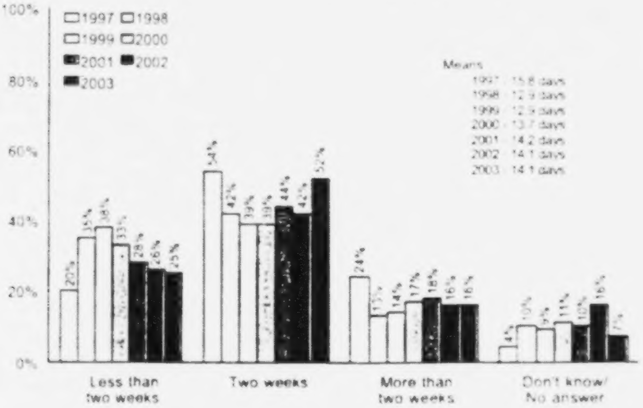
WCB Benefits

Injured workers continue to expect initial compensation within two weeks, and most continue to be satisfied with the time it took to receive their first cheque.

Expected Speed of Cheque Delivery

When clients were asked what they believe the expected turnaround time should be for receipt of their first benefit cheque, a majority indicate it should arrive in two weeks or less following an accident. In contrast, one in six clients say it should take longer than two weeks, while seven percent do not offer an opinion. These findings are consistent with those observed in 2002 and indeed have not changed substantially since 2001. The average numbers of days clients expect to wait for their cheque currently stands at 14.1, which is unchanged from 2002. It appears that since 2001, there has been a shift in expectations (in 2001 the average was 14.2 days). In looking back to previous years, it is evident that client expectations have changed modestly, as previously injured workers expected their cheque more promptly (i.e., 13.7 days in 2000, and 12.9 days in both 1999 and 1998). (Table 1.1)

How Quickly Should the First Benefit Cheque be Received Following Accident?



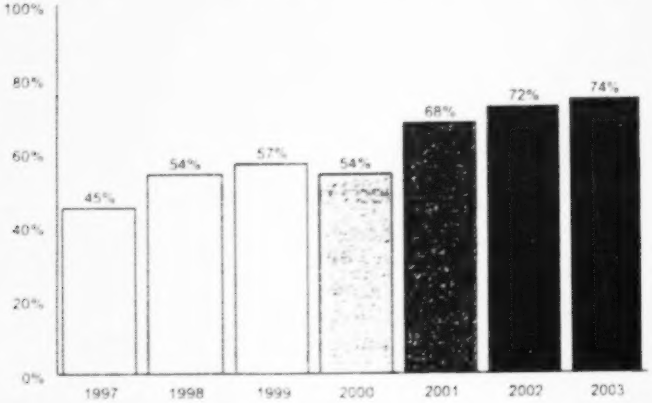
Across the various subgroups examined, clients from Cape Breton (32%) continue to be more likely to expect delivery of their first cheque in less than two weeks following their accident. One-quarter of clients in the Halifax ISU (25%), and two in ten in both the Central/North Shore region (20%) and in the South Shore/Valley (21%) region say delivery should take less than two weeks.

Of note, opinions regarding the expected turnaround time for benefits delivery do not vary substantially across the provinces, with the majority of workers in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island expecting their first benefit cheque within two weeks following their accident.

Satisfaction with Promptness of Delivery

Although some clients may not receive their benefit cheque as quickly as they might expect or hope, the majority continue to be satisfied with the length of time it took to receive their first cheque. More specifically, three-quarters say they are completely or mostly satisfied with the length of time it took to receive their cheque. In contrast, the remaining one-quarter is somewhat satisfied (13%), or is somewhat (4%) or completely (6%) dissatisfied. The remaining clients (3%) have no definite opinion at this time. Satisfaction with the delivery of the first benefit cheque continues to rise, and has increased significantly over levels measured in previous years. (Table 1.2)

Satisfaction with Promptness of Benefits Delivery



Higher levels of satisfaction are most evident among clients in the Cape Breton (79%) and Central/North Shore (79%) regions. While the level of satisfaction has remained unchanged for clients in Cape Breton, it should be noted that satisfaction levels have increased by nine percentage points for clients residing in the Central/North Shore region. Additionally, clients how have not returned to work and those classified as medium-risk, are more apt to express satisfaction with the length of time it took for them to receive their first benefit cheque. In contrast, once again those who have filed an appeal were least likely to express satisfaction.

Results reveal substantial variation in opinion on this topic across the provinces. Satisfaction with the promptness of benefits delivery is highest among injured workers in Nova Scotia, with the level of satisfaction among injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador slightly lower. In contrast, satisfaction with the timeliness of benefits delivery is significantly lower among injured workers on Prince Edward Island.

WCB Communications

Following a significant improvement in 2001, satisfaction with WCB communications has remained stable over the past two years.

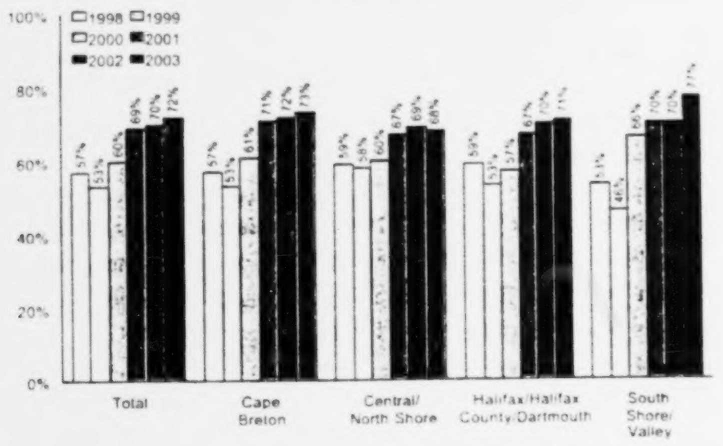
The year 2001 marked a notable improvement for the WCB in terms of meeting injured workers' expectations regarding the provision of information. Happily, this improvement has been sustained over the past two years. Indeed, seven in ten clients surveyed continue to feel they currently receive sufficient information about the WCB and its activities. Saying that, those who have filed an appeal, along with EBU clients and those who are categorized as high-risk are less likely to feel well informed, whereas clients in the South Shore/Valley ISU are most likely to feel they are well informed. (Table 3.1)

It is important to underscore that feeling informed about the WCB and its activities seemingly continues to play a key role in determining clients' overall feelings about their WCB experience. That is, satisfaction with the overall WCB experience remains higher among those who say they receive enough information about the organization, as compared to those injured workers who do not feel as well informed.

Of note, there is little difference between opinions of injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador and those in Nova Scotia in terms of the amount of information received from workers' compensation organizations, with no similar question being asked of injured workers on Prince Edward Island. (Table 3.1)

Currently Receive Enough Information About the WCB

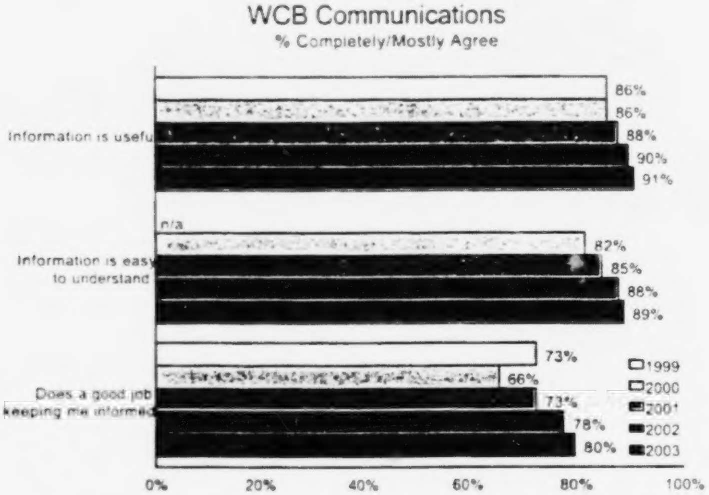
% Saying Yes



To assist with the identification of potential problems, those clients indicating they do not receive enough information (n=408) were asked to elaborate upon their perception. For the most part, clients simply feel they are not provided with adequate information or are uninformed (20%, compared with 18% in 2002) and four in ten would have liked to receive information on entitlements, rights, or benefits. This represents a considerable increase over the past two years (42% in 2003, 35% in 2002, and 16% in 2001). Information concerning procedures for processing claims has also experienced a progressive increase over the past two years (25%, compared with 14% in 2002 and 6% in 2001). A considerable number continue to say they are not aware of how the WCB works (15%, compared with 11%). Other reasons were identified by fewer respondents, and only a relatively small number (6%, unchanged from 2002) are unable to offer a definite response at this time. (Table 3.2)

Although a portion of clients feel there are certain shortcomings in the information provided by WCB, most clients surveyed remain positive concerning the usefulness of the information they receive, the degree to which the information is easily understood, and the degree to which they are informed of changes to their claim. (Tables 3.3.1-3)

For instance, the overwhelming majority of clients agree with the statement **"The information provided by the WCB is useful to me,"** while one in ten mostly (6%) or completely (2%) disagree or have no definite opinion at this time (1%). The high performance in this area is consistent with results reported over the past years. As in previous years, Extended Benefit Unit claimants and those who have filed an appeal continue to be least likely to share this viewpoint. (Table 3.3.3)



Nine in ten clients continue to agree **"The WCB's information is easy to understand,"** while one in ten mostly (9%, up 2 points from 2002) or completely (2%, down 1 point) disagree with this statement. Consistent with last year's findings, those most likely to disagree with this statement, include clients who have filed an appeal and EBU claimants. (Table 3.3.1)

As well, eight in ten clients believe **"The WCB does a good job of keeping me informed about important changes,"** which is in keeping with the previous year's findings, while two in ten mostly (11%, unchanged) or completely (6%, unchanged) disagree. Few have no definite opinion at this time (3%, down 2 %). As in 2002, clients who have filed an appeal as well as Extended Benefit Unit claimants continue to be more likely than others to say the WCB does not keep them informed about important changes. (Table 3.3.2)

As noted, the vast majority of injured workers (88%) surveyed are of the opinion that the information provided by the workers' compensation organization is useful to them and is easy to understand.

Similarly, most (80%) believe the organization does a good job of keeping them informed about important changes.

The WCB-NS and (to a somewhat lesser extent) the WHSCC in Newfoundland and Labrador receive particularly positive reviews in this regard, while workers on Prince Edward Island are somewhat more critical, especially in terms of the job done by the WCB-PEI of keeping them informed of important changes.

Contacting the WCB

Consistent with the previous year's findings, the overwhelming majority of injured workers contacted the WCB for assistance during the past year, with many perceiving this contact is being effective in addressing their concerns.

During the past year, over eight in ten (86%, compared with 84% in 2002) WCB injured worker clients say they have telephoned the organization for some form of assistance. Those most likely to have contacted the organization within this timeframe include those who have filed an appeal and those classified as high-risk clients. No significant variations were observed across the regions of the province.

Across the provinces, injured workers in Nova Scotia and on Prince Edward Island are somewhat more inclined to have telephoned their respective workers' compensation organization in the past year, as compared with those in Newfoundland and Labrador. (Table 3.4)

For the most part, eight in ten (82%) of those who placed a telephone call for assistance (n=1,290) indicate they were able to do what they set out to accomplish with the request, representing no change since last year. Across the demographic groups examined, those clients who have filed an appeal are less likely to feel they successfully accomplished what they set out to do.

While the majority of injured workers' in Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Prince Edward Island say they are able to accomplish what they set out to do when they telephone their workers' compensation organization for assistance, injured workers in Newfoundland and Labrador are slightly less likely to offer this opinion. (Table 3.5)

WCB Caseworker Commitments

Injured workers who placed a call to the WCB for assistance were asked to indicate whether or not their caseworker followed up on commitments that were made to them at that time. As in 2002, caseworkers are effectual in returning telephone calls to their clients. As well, current results indicate performance continues to improve in terms of WCB workers attending meetings, while arranging appointments to which they committed has remained stable. It is important to note that four in ten (39%) indicated that attending meetings did not apply to their particular situation. Likewise, two in ten indicated that arranging appointments on their behalf was not part of the commitment that their caseworker made to them. (Tables 3.6.1-3)

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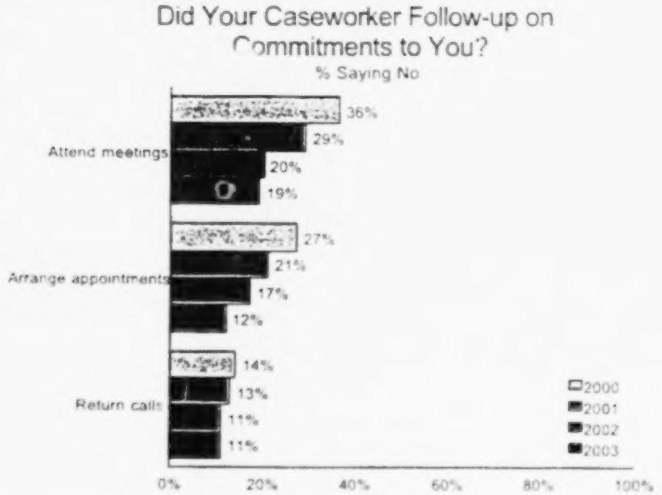

Across the province, injured workers in Cape Breton and the South Shore/Valley region are more likely to report WCB staff followed up on commitments made to them regarding arranging appointments and returning their calls.

In May 2002, injured workers were asked how long it took to have their call returned the last time they called the WCB for assistance. This question was included in the entire survey for 2003. As observed in 2002, six in ten clients (59%, compared with 60% in 2002) had their call returned immediately or within the same day, while an additional one in six (16%, unchanged) say their call was returned the next day. One in ten (10%, compared with 9%) waited two to three days for their call to be returned, while close to one in ten (6%, unchanged) indicate their call was never returned. While results are generally consistent, it is important to note that those who have filed an appeal (22%) are more likely to indicate that their call was returned within two to three days. (Table 3.6.9)

Duration of Administrative Aspect of Claim

Three-quarters of injured worker clients continue to be completely (49%, unchanged since 2002) or mostly (25%, up 5 points) satisfied with the length of time it took the WCB to handle administrative aspects of their claim, which includes reimbursement for such things as prescriptions and travel expenses. In contrast, fewer than two in ten are only somewhat satisfied (10%, unchanged), or somewhat (3%, down 2 points) or completely (3%, down 2 points) dissatisfied. The remaining nine percent have no definite opinion on this matter (compared with 12% in 2002). Results continue to indicate that those in the Halifax region are least likely to indicate satisfaction with the time it took the WCB to handle administrative aspects of their claim, as are those who have filed an appeal and those whose claim length was greater than nine weeks. (Table 3.9.1)

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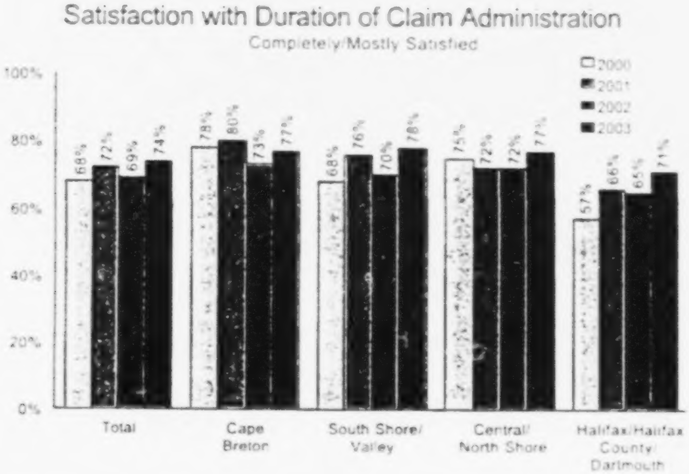

Satisfaction with Duration of Claim Administration
Completely/Mostly Satisfied

In 2003, client satisfaction ratings were ascertained concerning the ease of understanding the WCB's decision about their claim. In total, just over three-quarters of clients are either completely (4[illegible]%) or mostly (28%) satisfied with the explanation of the claim decision. In contrast, two in ten are somewhat satisfied (9%) or completely (5%) or mostly (5%) dissatisfied. Perhaps not unexpectedly, those who filed an appeal are more apt to be less satisfied in this regard. (Table 3.9.5R)

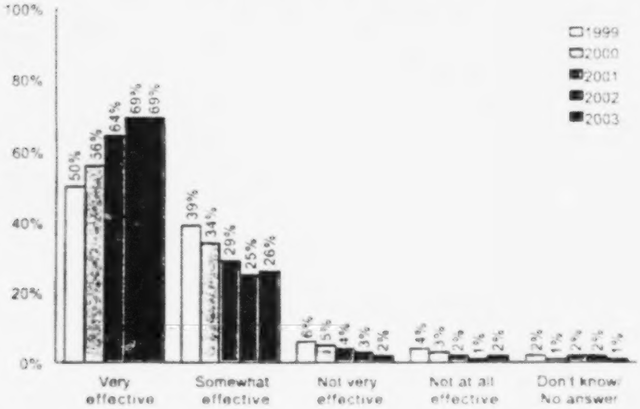
Effectiveness of the WCB

The WCB continues to receive a very positive assessment in terms of providing service.

Clients were asked to assess the overall effectiveness of the WCB in providing them with service. Consistent with the previous year, the WCB continues to be assessed very positively, with more than nine in ten rating the WCB as very or somewhat effective in its provision of service. In comparison, very few (4%) clients consider the WCB to be ineffective. (Table 1.8)

While the various client subgroups continue to rate the WCB positively in terms of being effective, differences are observed when examining those who consider the WCB to be very effective. Clients from Cape Breton (73% compared with 72% in 2002), followed by those from the South Shore/Valley region (71%, compared with 66%) are most likely to rate the WCB as being very effective, in comparison to those from the Halifax region (68%, compared with 66%) and those from the Central/North Shore (65%, compared with 74%). In addition, EBU claimants (50%, compared with 43%), those who have filed an appeal (32%, compared with 35%), and high-risk clients (63%) are least likely to rate the WCB as very effective in its provision of service.

Effectiveness of the WCB



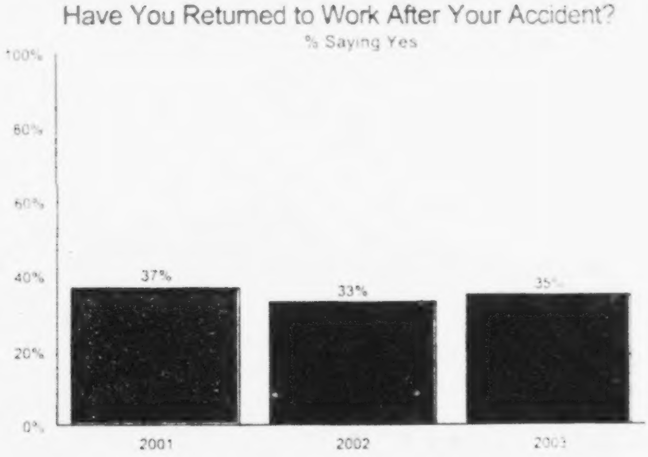
Injured workers in both Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and Labrador are of the opinion that workers' compensation organizations in their respective provinces are effective in terms of the service provided to injured workers, and there is little difference in opinion between injured workers in these two jurisdictions on this matter. Information on this issue was not available for injured workers on Prince Edward Island.

Returning to Work

One-third of clients report they have returned to work following their workplace accident.

As in 2002, the results of this study indicate that just over one-third (35%, compared with 33% in 2002) of those surveyed have returned to work. Similarly, two percent report they returned to work temporarily, however, they were sidelined with a recurring injury, which remains unchanged year over year.

More than six in ten have not returned to work; which continues to imply that, in keeping with previous years, most injured workers who participate in these surveys are doing so while they have active WCB claims. (Table 5.2)



Across the population, medium-risk clients (44%)are twice as likely than high-risk clients (22%) to have returned to work. Similarly, those with claims longer than nine weeks (46%) are almost likely to have returned to work. In contrast, clients in the Cape Breton region (2[illegible]) and those who have filed an appeal (27%) are least likely to have returned to work.

Suggestions for Improvement

Similar to previous years. no single topic emerges as a major issue when injured workers provide suggestions with respect to how the WCB might improve the services it provides to clients.

As in previous surveys, clients were one again, what, if anything, they think could be done to improve the services provided to injured workers. When asked this question (without prompted responses), clients continue to be most likely to state there are no improvements required or do not offer an opinion. The following table illustrates the various suggestions offered by at least four percent of injured workers. (Table 4.5)

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What Can the WCB Do to Improve Its Service?

	1997 %	1998 %	1999 %	2000 %	2001 %	2002 %	2003 %
Provide more money/benefits	6	11	11	10	11	7	**8**
Improve communication/More detailed communication	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	5	4	**7**
Faster delivery of benefits	17	19	14	15	9	9	**6**
Listen to injured workers	n/a	3	5	9	8	4	**6**
Return phone calls/Quicker response time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	**5**
Return phone calls/Quicker response time	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	**5**
More access to information	8	18	12	9	5	4	**4**
Respect injured workers	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	2	3	**4**
Explain policies/procedures better	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1	3	**4**
Nothing/Don't know/No answer	25	34	36	40	42	49	**47**

The most frequently offered suggestions for improvement are provide more money and/or benefits, improve communication/provide more detailed communication, faster delivery of benefits and listen to injured workers although these are mentioned by, at most, only one in ten clients.

Low-risk Claims Clients

The levels of satisfaction expressed by low-risk claims clients are in keeping with those of the larger injured worker population and, overall satisfaction with most service among low-risk claimants has remained stable year over year.

The following section contains a brief summary of results based on a total of 400 interviews conducted with a random sample of injured workers reporting low-risk claims (those involving little or no time loss) during 2003.

Low-risk clients' opinions of the WCB are not appreciably different from the general injured workers population. For instance, low-risk clients express a similar high level of satisfaction with the WCB compared with other clients. Indeed, three-quarters (76%, down 2 points since 2002) of low-risk clients are either completely or mostly satisfied with their experience with the WCB. The rationale attributed to this high level of satisfaction include experiencing no problems with the WCB, quick response time, providing good service, helpful staff, staff attitude, the provision of useful information, and the staff's attitude. In contrast, those who express dissatisfaction do so primarily because of the way their claim was handled, the perceived lack of money received, the length of time it took to process the claim, the lack of adequate information, being turned down or having their claim terminated and a general dissatisfaction with the claim outcome.

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Clients within the low-risk group are relatively satisfied with the each WCB service area examined. While increases in satisfaction for many areas were evident in 2002, it appears that there has been minimal movement in 2003. For instance, low-risk clients continue to express considerable satisfaction with the clarity of letters (86%, up 1 point), politeness of staff (84%, up 3 points), being treated fairly (83%, up 3 points), promptness of staff's response to their questions (82%, up 2 points), accessibility of staff (78%, up 1 point), clarity of brochures (78%, down 4 points), frequency of contact (75%, down 1 point), ability to answer questions (74%, down 2 points), and outcome of their claim (71%, up 1 point). In terms of the administrative aspects of a claim, six in ten (61%, down 4 points) low-risk clients are either completely or mostly satisfied with the length of time it took to handle tasks such as prescriptions, travel expenses and arranging appointments. As well, satisfaction is lower for the length of time it took to get the first benefits cheque (57%, up 2 points), which is considerably lower than the 74 percent noted for the general population of injured workers.

With respect to effectiveness, the overwhelming majority of low-risk clients (93%, unchanged since 2002) continue to believe the WCB is either very or somewhat effective in providing service, while very few (5%, up 1 point) indicate the organization is not very or not at all effective. As well, seven in ten (73%, down 3 points) of low-risk clients are aware the WCB pays for all health care costs associated with a claim.

Overall, close to two-thirds (64%, down 1 point) of low-risk clients are completely or mostly satisfied with the WCB's telephone system, which is slightly lower (77%) than the general population of injured workers. It is interesting to note that, with respect to receiving information, half (49%) indicate that written correspondence in the form of mail or a letter would be most appropriate, while over one third (36%) indicate that the telephone would be the best medium to employ. A few additional clients indicate notification regarding their claim would be best through work, by email, their caseworker or some other form.

Seven in ten (74%, up 2 points) low-risk clients continue to believe that they currently receive enough information about the WCB and its activities, while one-quarter (25%, down 2 points) do not. When asked to indicate what information clients would like to receive but did not, requests included information on entitlements, rights, and benefits, and more information on how WCB works. Other responses included generally not feeling well-informed, procedures for claims and how it works and never having received any information.

Over the past year, the number of low-risk clients who have telephoned the WCB for assistance has remained stable (40%, up 2 points). Among those low-risk clients who have telephoned the WCB within this timeframe for assistance, the overwhelming majority (88%, no change) report they were able to accomplish what they set out to do with the telephone call. In addition, most (80%, up 2 points) of these low-risk clients indicated that their WCB caseworker followed up on commitments made to them, which is consistent with the findings in 2002.

For the most part, when asked to suggest ways the WCB could improve its services for injured workers, six in ten low-risk clients indicate that no improvements are necessary (23%) or they are unable to provide a definite response to this question (37%). Saying that, just fewer than one in ten

(7%) indicate faster delivery of benefits would improve the WCB. As well, improving communications and providing detail, along with more access to information, and explanations of policies and procedures are also mentioned. No other recommendation is mentioned by more than four percent of those surveyed.

If they were let go by their employer after they returned work following an accident, one-half of low-risk injured workers indicate they would initially seek assistance from the WCB. This finding is consistent with that observed in 2002. Again, in keeping with last year's findings, one-quarter would turn to the Department of Labour, while less than two in ten would go to the employment office, their union or a lawyer.

Overall, the majority of low-risk clients have returned to work since their accident, with three-quarters (74%, down 3 points) indicating such. Injured workers in Cape Breton continue to be somewhat less likely than injured workers from the rest of Nova Scotia to return to work.

Extended Benefit Unit Clients

Although EBU claimants continue to be less likely than other clients to rate the WCB in a favourable manner, significant improvements in satisfaction levels with the WCB have been noted in most areas for the past two years.

Over the past two years, significant improvements have been observed in EBU claimant satisfaction with the WCB in all service areas, with the exception of politeness, where the satisfaction levels have shown improvement, but not to the same degree. While these increases over the past two years are indeed positive, it is still important to keep in mind that EBU claimants continue to offer a considerably less positive evaluation of the WCB when compared with the overall injured worker population.

The following table illustrates satisfaction scores across a variety of service elements among EBU claimants compared with the general client population.

Client Satisfaction Measures
% Completely/Mostly Satisfied

	EBU Population %		General Population %	
	2002	**2003**	2002	**2003**
Politeness	80	**84**	87	**86**
Clarity of letters	70	**77**	85	**85**
Ability to answer questions	59	**70**	80	**79**
Promptness	62	**70**	80	**80**
Frequency of contact	45	**61**	74	**75**

Client Satisfaction Measures
% Completely/Mostly Satisfied

	EBU Population %		General Population %	
Accessibility	64	**76**	76	**75**
Overall WCB experience	47	**57**	72	**74**
Brochure clarity	61	**68**	76	**80**
Outcome of claim	39	**49**	71	**72**

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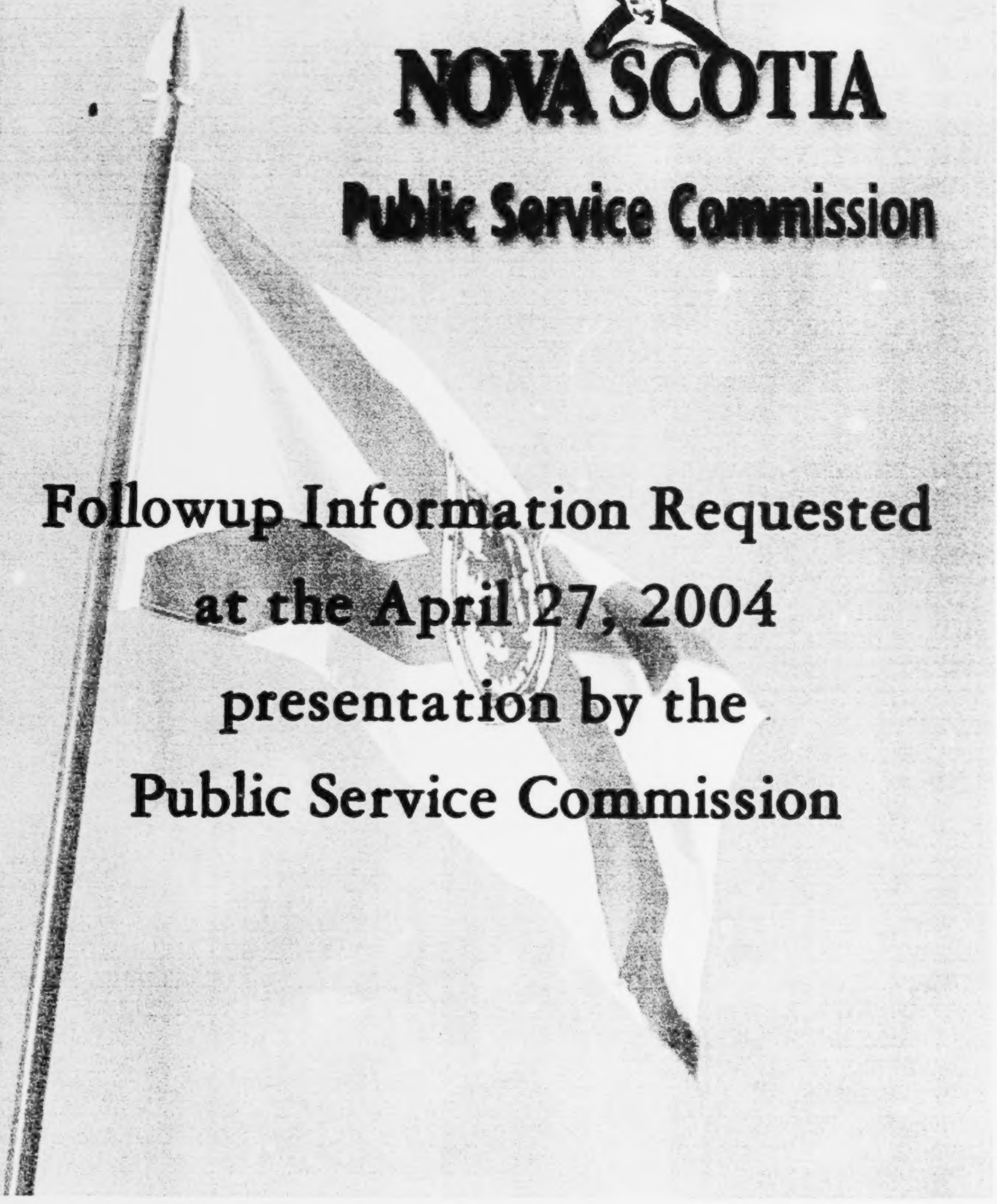
APPENDIX C

NOVA SCOTIA

Public Service Commission



Followup Information Requested at the April 27, 2004 presentation by the Public Service Commission

Questions:

1. **How many persons are employed in management positions in the Civil Service and what percentage are female/male? Of these figures, please provide a breakdown of managerial positions relating to female vs. male within each provincial department.**

As of June, 2004 there were 1,184 MCP (Management Classification Plan) positions in the Civil Service although many of these positions are held by "Individual Contributors" who do not directly manage other employees. Female incumbents account for 521 or 44% of the total number of MCP positions. The breakdown of MCP positions by department is depicted in Appendix A.

2. **In regard to the average pay scale in the Public Service, how does that compare, in each of the age groupings shown to the Standing Committee, with the private sector?**

Information provided by the Human Resources Management System providing the average pay scale for the age groupings shown to the Standing Committee is provided in Appendix B. Appendix C graphically depicts comparative information for compensation for MCP positions in the Nova Scotia Civil Service versus Atlantic public and private sector positions. Data for Bargaining Unit positions is currently being assembled and will be forwarded as soon as possible. Please note that this information has been provided under terms of a license agreement and the data may not be released externally.

3. **Of the commitment to double the existing Civil Service Career Starts Program for yong university graduates, only 5 percent of the Public Service is below the age of thirty. Please provide a numerical breakdown year by year from 1999 to 2004, of Career Starts Program.**

1999 - 2000: 8 interns; 2000 - 2001: 16 interns; 2001 - 2002: 16 interns; 2002 - 2003 17 interns; 2003 - 2004: 16 interns

4. **On the issue of affirmative action, are other provinces in Canada doing a better job than Nova Scotia? Please provide the Standing Committee with statistical information on this issue.**

Limited data is readily available from some jurisdictions however Appendix D presents information comparing Designated Affirmative Action Groups in the civil service of Nova Scotia, British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

5. **In regard to the number of people who work on contract or on short-term or part-time arrangements with government, what are the numbers of those employees? Please provide a breakdown of those employees by gender and age.**

Numbers of contract/casual/term staff employed fluctuated seasonally. The annual average numbers for 2003 were 1045 casuals, 176 civil service terms and 118 contracts. Appendix E, F and G provide numbers by department/agency/etc., by gender and age and on a monthly basis with an annual average.

6. **Historically, how do absenteeism rates within government compare? Are they declining, are they increasing or are they consistent?**

Absenteeism rates include time lost for general illness, medical/dental and short term illness. In the ten year period from 1994 - 1995 to 2003 - 2004 absenteeism rates in the Nova Scotia Civil Service have declined 19% from an average of 11.41 person days per year to 9.19 person days per year. Appendix H shows the changes in absenteeism rates for all three categories.

Date: 2004 07 12

Distribution of MCP Employees
Using Data Extracted
2004 June 01

Dept Desc		
	FEMALE	MALE
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS	3	3
ACADIAN AFFAIRS	0	1
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	9	29
COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA	39	16
COMMUNITY SERVICES	65	53
EDUCATION	23	33
ELECTION EXPENSES	0	1
EMERGENCY MEASURES	0	3
ENERGY	2	10
ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR	20	50
FINANCE	32	34
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION OF PRIVACY REVIEW OFFICE	3	0
HEALTH	75	33
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION	3	1
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	2	6
JUSTICE	65	100
NATURAL RESOURCES	15	68
NOVA SCOTIA SECURITIES COMMISSION	2	2
NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD	0	1
NS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	32	9
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	13	22
OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION	7	4
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL	11	12
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN	1	0
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER	3	1
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	0	2
SENIOR CITIZENS SECRETARIAT	1	0
SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS	45	53
SYDNEY TAR PONDS AGENCY (NS)	0	3
TOURISM AND CULTURE	19	22
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC WORKS	19	85
TREASURY AND POLICY BOARD	9	5
VOLUNTARY PLANNING	2	1
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL	1	0
Total	521	663

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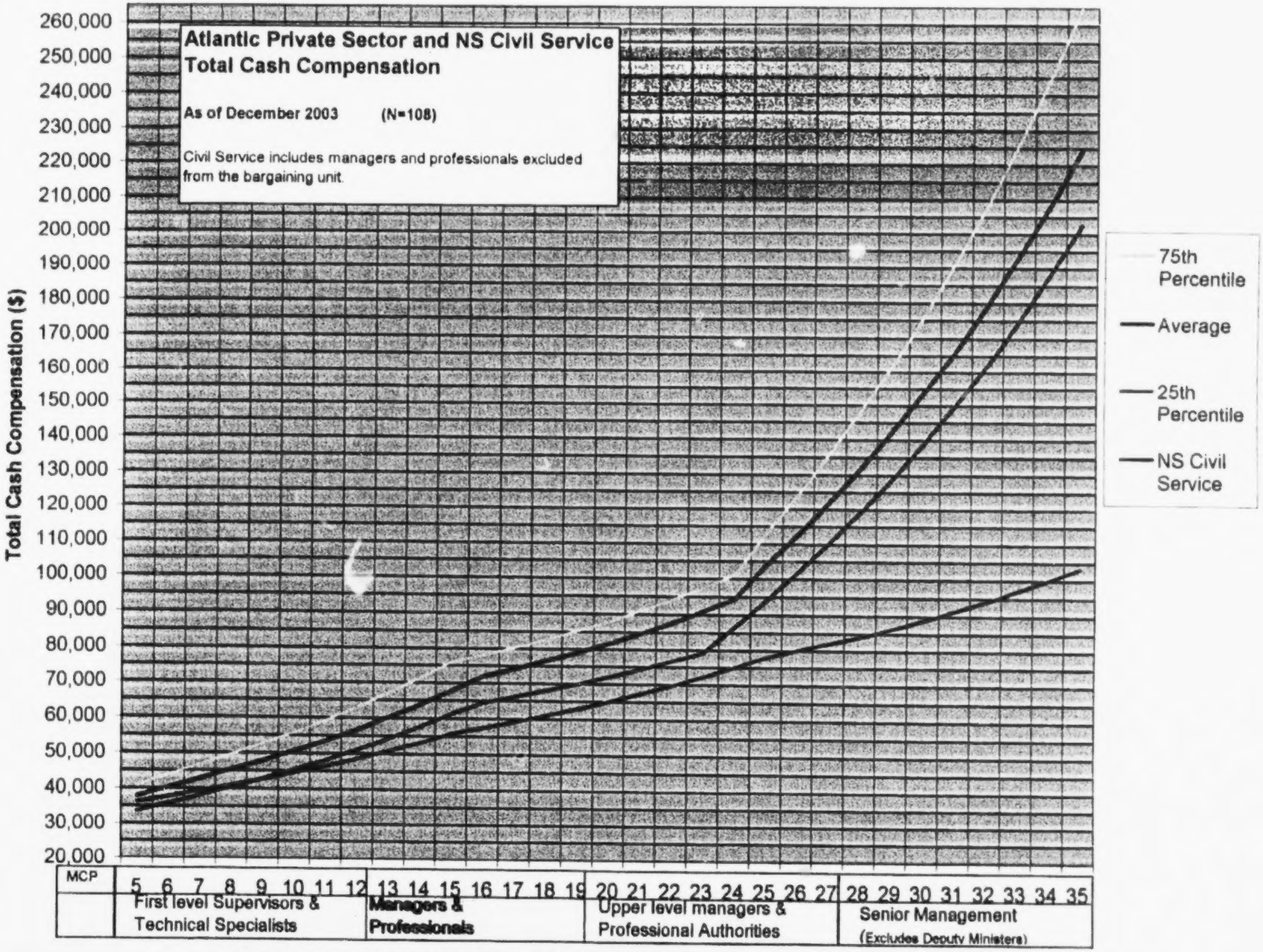
Average Salary for Civil Service Employees Broken Down By Age Groupings

Under 25	25 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +
$31,109.43	$36,750.75	$43,422.15	$46,588.86	$48,928.90	$46,985.83


Atlantic Private Sector and NS Civil Service
Total Cash Compensation

As of December 2003 (N=108)

Civil Service includes managers and professionals excluded from the bargaining unit.

Market data supplied by Hay Group. Due to license agreement data must not be released externally.

Government of Nova Scotia

Designated Affirmative Action Groups (As of November 30, 2003)					
	Aboriginal	Blacks	Other Racially Visible	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service*	0.56%	2.18%	0.84%	5.43%	57.58%
NS Population**	1.8%	2.1%	1.6%	N/A	51.0%
NS Working Age Population** (Age 15-64)	1.7%	1.8%	1.6%	13.4%	50.2%

* Totals based on Civil Servants who have completed the Workforce Survey.
** Statistics Canada Census, 2001

Government of British Columbia

Designated Affirmative Action Groups (As of July 21, 2003)				
	Aboriginal	Visible Minorities	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service	2.1%	7.7%	5.2%	57.1%
BC Population	3.8%	21.3%	8.0%	50.5%
BC Available Workforce*	3.2%	14.0%	5.5%	55.9%

Based on percentage representation
* Available workforce reflects the occupational and geographic distribution of the ministry

GOVERNMENT OF SASKATCHEWAN

Designated Affirmative Action Groups				
	Aboriginal	Visible Minorities	Persons with Disabilities	Women
Civil Service	10.2%	2.3%	3.0%	49.7%
Saskatchewan Population	13.5%	2.9%	14.5%	50.7% (15 years and older)*
Saskatchewan Available Workforce*	not available	not available	not available	46.2%

* Information obtained from Statistics Canada

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

6/23/2004

Department	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS	Civil Service Term	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	2	3
ACADIAN AFFAIRS	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES	Casual	164	189	192	153	84	104	115	114	132	174	187	184	149
	Civil Service Term	5	5	5	5	6	8	8	9	9	7	8	8	7
	Contract	19	19	19	17	15	12	9	9	14	13	14	12	14
COLLEGE DE L'ACADIE	Casual	34	37	37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9
	Civil Service Term	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	2
	Contract	6	6	6	5	5	5	5	5	0	0	0	0	4
COMMUNICATIONS NOVA SCOTIA	Casual	4	4	5	1	0	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	7	8	9	9	8	8	8	8	9	6
	Contract	11	10	10	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	3	3	5
COMMUNITY SERVICES	Casual	82	74	79	73	78	78	88	100	80	76	76	82	81
	Civil Service Term	13	16	16	16	20	20	22	21	26	27	29	28	21
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
EDUCATION	Casual	18	23	23	22	21	25	26	27	21	27	25	25	24
	Civil Service Term	10	9	9	9	9	11	11	11	10	11	11	10	10
	Contract	5	5	5	4	4	4	3	3	3	2	2	2	4
ELECTION EXPENSES	Casual	5	5	5	5	6	9	5	10	5	5	4	4	6
EMERGENCY MEASURES	Casual	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	2	2	2	1
	Civil Service Term	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
ENERGY	Casual	0	0	0	3	3	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	3
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
	Contract	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
ENVIRONMENT AND LABOUR	Casual	20	20	20	18	27	30	37	39	29	18	20	21	25
	Civil Service Term	12	13	13	11	12	12	13	14	11	10	11	10	12

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

6/23/2004

	Contract	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OFFICE	Contract	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
FINANCE	Casual	12	12	12	12	11	13	11	12	11	12	14	13	12
	Civil Service Term	2	3	3	2	4	3	6	5	5	6	6	6	4
	Contract	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2	3
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & PROTECTION OF PRIVACY REVIEW	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
GOVERNMENT HOUSE	Casual	3	3	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3
HEALTH	Casual	30	29	33	33	36	33	43	44	35	33	36	36	35
	Civil Service Term	8	7	9	9	11	15	14	18	19	13	13	14	13
	Contract	10	11	11	7	6	5	5	6	6	7	7	6	7
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION	Casual	1	1	2	2	2	1	1	2	2	1	1	1	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS	Casual	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	1
	Contract	0	1	1	2	2	2	0	2	2	2	2	1	1
JUSTICE	Casual	38	39	35	33	31	34	40	40	39	40	43	39	38
	Civil Service Term	25	24	26	28	29	31	32	30	27	28	29	29	28
	Contract	12	10	10	8	10	7	11	11	11	9	9	8	10
LEGISLATIVE EXPENSES	Casual	4	5	5	5	8	10	10	7	4	9	9	6	7
	Contract	13	13	13	14	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	12	14
MINISTERS SALARIES AND EXPENSES	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2
N. S. A. C. RESEARCH	Casual	61	66	64	52	65	88	95	103	70	73	77	80	75
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	2	3
NATURAL RESOURCES	Casual	107	104	101	76	221	460	638	662	500	350	167	139	294

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

	Civil Service Term	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	8	9	9	9	7
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1	1
NOVA SCOTIA ADVISORY COUNCIL ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN	Casual	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0
NOVA SCOTIA POLICE COMMISSION	Casual	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NOVA SCOTIA SECURITIES	Civil Service Term	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Contract	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
NOVA SCOTIA SPORT AND RECREATION COMMISSION	Casual	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
NOVA SCOTIA UTILITY AND REVIEW BOARD	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
NS PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION	Casual	2	2	2	1	3	1	3	5	3	3	2	1	2
	Civil Service Term	8	8	8	5	4	3	2	2	1	1	1	1	4
	Contract	2	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	4	3	3	3	3
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	Casual	3	3	4	6	6	7	9	12	11	10	9	11	8
	Civil Service Term	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3
OFFICE OF HEALTH PROMOTION	Casual	0	0	0	2	3	5	5	6	4	2	3	4	3
	Contract	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	1
OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR GENERAL	Civil Service Term	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSMAN	Casual	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	3	1
	Contract	8	8	8	6	6	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	6
OFFICE OF THE PREMIER	Contract	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
OFFICE OF THE SPEAKER	Casual	22	21	7	31	28	16	11	11	12	35	14	8	18

Information Management
Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

PETROLEUM DIRECTORATE	Casual	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE	Casual	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	9	9	8	7	7	6
	Civil Service Term	15	15	15	14	14	14	14	14	14	13	13	12	14
SERVICE NOVA SCOTIA AND MUNICIPAL RELATIONS	Casual	88	87	87	86	88	87	82	83	85	78	72	73	83
	Civil Service Term	25	21	21	19	19	21	18	22	20	23	22	22	21
	Contract	5	6	6	6	7	7	6	5	5	5	6	5	6
SYDNEY TAR PONDS AGENCY (NS)	Civil Service Term	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Contract	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
TECHNOLOGY & SCIENCE	Casual	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Contract	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOURISM AND CULTURE	Casual	72	74	78	68	101	182	217	220	208	177	88	71	130
	Civil Service Term	2	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
TOURISM AND CULTURE	Contract	8	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	5	5	5	4	6
TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC	Casual	24	23	23	23	29	38	52	56	33	28	28	24	32
	Civil Service Term	7	10	9	8	11	13	11	13	13	13	14	16	12
	Contract	2	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	2	2	3
TREASURY AND POLICY BOARD	Casual	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
	Civil Service Term	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Contract	3	3	4	4	5	4	5	5	4	4	5	5	4
VOLUNTARY PLANNING	Casual	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
WORKERS' COMPENSATION APPEAL TRIBUNAL	Casual	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

Public Service Commission

Information Management

Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

Date: 2004 07 19

Gender	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
Female	Casual	565	586	594	502	529	701	828	872	744	716	596	581	651
	Civil Service Term	99	101	104	101	114	123	123	129	125	127	128	130	117
	Contract	71	71	72	61	59	50	46	48	51	50	46	41	56
Male	Casual	246	254	241	215	334	538	678	702	560	458	303	266	400
	Civil Service Term	56	54	53	54	56	62	62	63	62	57	62	61	59
	Contract	69	71	70	61	65	63	62	64	60	57	60	56	63

Public Service Commission

Information Management

Average Number of Casuals/Contracts/Terms in 2003

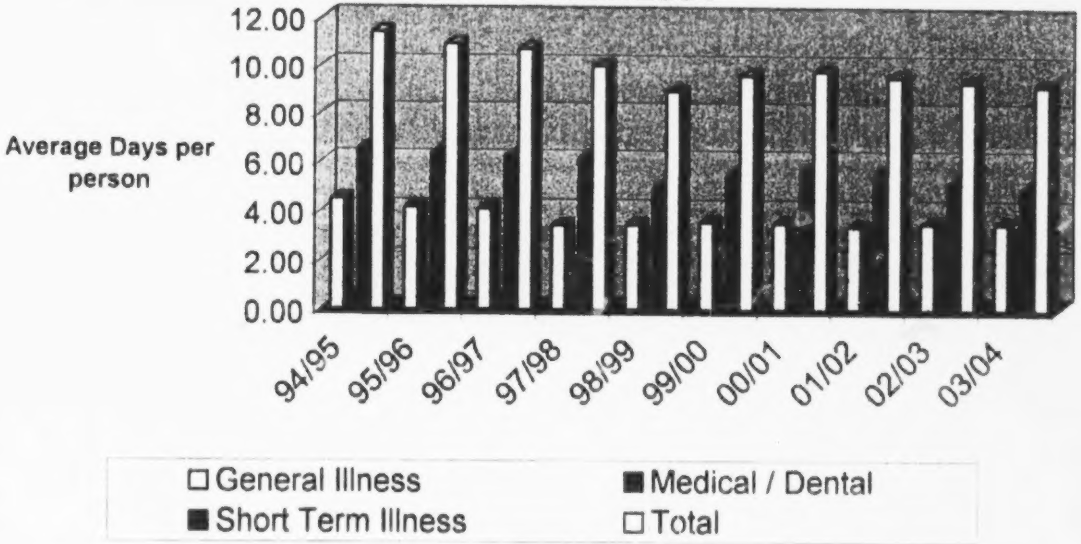
Date: 2004 07 19

Age	Appointment Type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Average
00 - 24	Casual	188	207	193	163	167	316	472	504	304	236	193	187	261
	Civil Service Term	5	6	6	6	6	6	5	4	4	5	5	5	5
	Contract	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	2
25 - 29	Casual	132	127	128	113	113	157	191	200	166	160	142	134	147
	Civil Service Term	25	26	27	26	32	36	37	40	39	36	35	33	33
	Contract	22	23	22	19	20	17	19	21	20	20	20	20	20
30 - 39	Casual	182	177	181	168	211	268	292	300	280	267	194	186	226
	Civil Service Term	61	58	61	60	64	69	70	69	67	66	70	69	65
	Contract	42	40	42	37	37	31	31	30	30	29	29	27	34
40 - 49	Casual	156	170	172	140	184	229	253	256	257	228	179	166	199
	Civil Service Term	44	43	39	37	41	50	47	49	44	48	50	55	46
	Contract	35	37	36	32	34	33	29	29	26	21	19	15	29
50 - 59	Casual	99	103	102	82	118	178	196	208	204	193	119	108	143
	Civil Service Term	16	17	19	21	22	20	21	23	26	22	23	22	21
	Contract	33	33	32	27	26	25	23	26	27	26	27	25	28
60 +	Casual	54	56	59	51	70	91	102	106	93	90	72	66	76
	Civil Service Term	4	5	5	5	5	4	5	7	7	7	7	7	6
	Contract	6	7	8	5	5	5	4	4	5	8	8	7	6

Absenteeism in the Civil Service Workforce
1994/1995 to 2003/2004

	94/95	95/96	96/97	97/98	98/99	99/00	00/01	01/02	02/03	03/04
General Illness	4.46	4.15	4.07	3.41	3.44	3.54	3.51	3.37	3.50	3.50
Medical/Dental	0.41	0.42	0.42	0.48	0.54	0.60	0.64	0.67	0.73	0.77
Short Term Illness	6.54	6.35	6.22	6.11	4.96	5.47	5.62	5.50	5.10	4.92
Total	**11.41**	**10.92**	**10.71**	**10.00**	**8.94**	**9.61**	**9.77**	**9.54**	**9.33**	**9.19**

Absenteeism in the Civil Service Workforce
1994/1995 to 2003/2004



HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET

2004-2005

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INTRODUCTION/PLANNING CONTEXT

The Halifax Regional School Board is responsible for administering the public school system within the geographic boundary of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Board operates 137 schools serving almost 56,600 students and employing over 5000 teachers and support staff.

Since 2001-2002, the Board has taken a conservative approach to budgeting to ensure flexibility in addressing unforeseen or unexpected events. This approach has created financial stability within the Board and resulted in budget surplus for the past two years. This has also provided the resources to address several key priorities.

As noted in the 2003-2004 business plan, the Superintendent undertook extensive consultations throughout the system in the fall of 2002. With the outcome of these consultations in the "Blueprint for Improvement", as well as the Department of Education's "Learning for Life", a strategic focus and direction has been set to guide the Halifax Regional School Board for the next several years.

In preparation for the 2004-2005 business planning process, the Board members and Senior Staff held a workshop on November 4, 2003 to review goals and the planning context.

Through consensus, the Board members agreed that the following statements reflect the context in which the final 2004-2005 business plan and budget will be prepared. As this is the initial draft of the business plan, some of these context statements may change before the final business plan is approved in the spring of 2004.

Planning Context Statements

- Pressure to improve student achievement will continue from parents, the Department of Education and the media. This pressure will necessitate ongoing commitment to transparency and accountability.
- Literacy and Mathematics will continue to remain the primary focus for both the Halifax Regional School Board and the Department of Education.
- The release for the first time, of a variety of data (baseline data), will influence business plan priorities for 2004-2005.
- A degree of flexibility will be required to address identified school and system needs following analysis of baseline data.
- Student enrolment will continue to decline and, as a result, reduced funding will be a reality.
- The Department of Education will continue to use targeted funding to achieve certain objectives (e.g. Class Size Cap).
- The Board will continue to experience a high turnover of teaching and administrative staff due to retirements.
- The Board will experience significant pressure during negotiations with various bargaining units that would impact the financial position of the Board.
- $4.9 million has been committed by the government for implementation of the BLAC Report over the next several years.
- Demands for delivery of special education services to students will continue to grow.
- The Department of Education will require additional attention by school boards to specific initiatives: Physical Education, Safe and Healthy Schools, Provincial Time-to-Learn Strategy.

- Maintaining the current level of Supplementary Funding will be a challenge for the Board.
- The Board's commitment to facilities repair and renewal will continue.

The Board's key focus remains on student achievement and Planning for Improvement. The Board will continue to seek a commitment to immediately review the fairness and equity of formula funding. The Board's success in achieving its business plan goals hinge on fair, equitable and adequate funding.

BOARD GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

The Halifax Regional School Board is comprised of fourteen elected school board members. Thirteen members are elected in local electoral districts. One member is elected to represent African Nova Scotians throughout the jurisdiction of the Board. Earlier this spring, the Board also became the first school board in Nova Scotia to have a non-voting Student Advisor on the Board. This student representative joined the Board in September 2003.

The regular standing committees of the Board are the Committee of the Whole and the Audit and Finance Committee. Both committees comprise all fourteen members and the Student Advisor. The Committee of the Whole meets the 1st and 2nd Tuesday of each month, Audit and Finance on the 3rd Tuesday and the regular Board meeting is held on the 4th Tuesday of each month.

The Board has one other standing committee, the Policy Committee. This committee meets as required at the call of the Chair. The Board also has the authority to create Ad Hoc Committees that may be required from time to time.

The Board adopted a revised set of by-laws in October 2002 to govern the conduct of Board meetings and outline other rules of order and meeting procedure for Board members.

MISSION

The mission of the Halifax Regional School Board is:

> *To ensure that each student develops passion for learning, for achieving personal success, and for building a harmonious global community.*

The belief statements that underpin this mission statement are:

- Every person has value
- Individuals are accountable for their decisions
- Honesty and respect are fundamental to healthy relationships
- Continuous learning is critical to personal growth and an enriched life
- Each person has a valuable contribution to make
- Diversity enriches
- Positive attitude is essential for personal success
- Respect for self is fundamental to respect for others

CORE BUSINESS FUNCTIONS

As per Section 64 (1) of the Education Act, the Halifax Regional School Board is accountable to the Minister of Education and is responsible for the control and management of the public schools within its jurisdiction. The Board's general responsibilities are clearly outlined in Section 64 (2) of the Act. To facilitate the implementation of the Blueprint for Improvement, the Board underwent an administrative reorganization in the winter of 2003. This reorganization resulted in the creation of six new departments under the overall direction of the Superintendent of Schools. The core businesses of these departments are:

A. SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

School Administration, through the office of the Executive Director, is responsible for overall leadership and management of school operations. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Oversees development and implementation of policies and procedures to support schools and students.

2. Works with school administrators on communicating with parents and School Advisory Councils on Board issues.

3. Oversees the professional development, appointment and evaluation of principals and vice-principals.

4. Ensures a safe, orderly and supportive learning environment at each school site.

5. Supports the Planning for Improvement Initiatives.

6. Provides support in establishing positive partnerships with the community.

7. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Superintendent from time to time.

B. PROGRAM

Program, through the office of the Executive Director, is responsible for the overall leadership in the delivery of the Public School Program (PSP) from implementation to evaluation. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Ensures the delivery of quality special education student services in conjunction with legislation and policies.

2. Leadership in the area of programs, student services, race relations, cross cultural understanding and human rights (RCH) and education and accountability as they relate to students.

3. In collaboration with the senior management team, ensures a strong school improvement process in support of student learning.

4. Ensures the effectiveness of all delivery processes as they relate to students.

5. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Superintendent from time to time.

C. BOARD SERVICES

Board Services, through the office of the Superintendent, is responsible for the overall executive leadership and management of the Board. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Performs the duties of the Superintendent of Schools as prescribed under the Education Act and Regulations.

2. Leads Senior Staff and provides for the executive supervision of all activity related to the core functions in all other Board departments.

3. Supervises legal services, including due diligence, negotiations, contract maintenance and employee grievance.

4. Establishes annual objectives to address issues of planning, strategic leadership, staff development and system improvement.

5. Liaises with Board Members to encourage a collaborative approach to system leadership.

6. Supervises communications as they relate to system goals, outcomes, issues identification and public support for education.

7. Maintains all official Board documentation, including minutes, correspondence and communications with funding agencies.

8. Provides for the review, development and implementation of Board policy.

9. Provides staff support to assist in planning and research projects for all aspects of the Board's Operations.

10. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Board from time to time.

D. SCHOOL FACILITIES

School Facilities, through the office of the Executive Director, is responsible for overall leadership and management of the operations functions of the Board. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Provides maintenance, repairs and custodial services to all schools and buildings.

2. Facilitates the planning, prioritizing, implementation and management of all short and long term capital building requirements.

3. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Board from time to time.

E. FINANCIAL SERVICES

Financial Services, through the office of the Executive Director, is responsible for overall leadership and management of the finance, technology services, contract and grants administration, EXCEL and student transportation functions of the Board. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Performs corporate accounting, payroll, financial reporting and financial planning and control functions for the entire Board.
2. Oversees the preparation of the Board's annual business plan, budget (both General Fund and Supplementary Fund) and year end financial statements.
3. Oversees the implementation of the Board's policy and procedures for procurement.
4. Manages the student transportation function in partnership with Stock Transportation.
5. Administers Board support services in the areas of EXCEL, facilities rentals and information technology.
6. Administers administrative contracts and agreements on behalf of the Board.
7. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Superintendent from time to time.

F. HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

Human Resource Services, through the office of the Executive Director, is responsible for overall leadership and management of human resources, employee relations and administrative services to the Board. Core functions are broadly described as follows:

1. Provides human resources support for all employees through recruitment, screening, hiring and retention.
2. Provides employee benefit support through the administration of benefit plans, pension plans and insurance for all employees.
3. Provides professional development support through the administration of professional development funds.
4. Provides administrative support through facilitation of job descriptions, evaluation forms, personnel files and other records pertaining to employees.
5. Provides labour relations support for four unionized groups and one non-unionized group through the administration and negotiation of the collective agreements
6. Provides support for services as mandated through the Human Rights Act, Trade Union Act and Occupational Health and Safety Act.
7. Undertakes all other duties as may be assigned by the Superintendent from time to time.

ANNUAL REPORT OF ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2003-2004

The achievements on the goals and priorities for 2003-2004 are as follows:

Goal #1 *To improve student achievement.*

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #1 Define, implement and support a board-wide framework for School Improvement Planning that is based on the collection and use of reliable data on student achievement.	• A Planning for Improvement Framework has been defined on three levels – Board, school and classroom • Planning for Improvement presentations were made to Board (September 9), to Superintendent's SAC and RCH Advisory Councils (October 20 and November 20) • Workshops were held with Phase One Schools Leadership Teams (May 27 and October 7, 8 and 14) • A School Profile document based on ten indicators derived from research on effective schools has been developed for use in HRSB school communities for data collection and as a tool for self-evaluation • Statistics Canada Census Data (2001) has been provided to schools (November 13) and to the Board (November 18) for all of HRM, but also in a form customized for each school community or catchment area based on postal code information provided by the Board • Parent/guardian, staff and student surveys have been developed and are being completed in our school communities (November and December) • Professional development to meet the expected Department of Education timelines for English and French Second Language Public School Programs and Services for Students is in progress across all families of schools • Attendance Policy and Student Assessment and Evaluation Policy reviews have commenced • The DOE primary cap of 25 students has been implemented

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #2 Direct additional resources to Reading Recovery and P-12 literacy initiatives	• Literacy assessments, aligned with provincial reading and viewing outcomes, have been completed for all HRSB students in grades 2 and 9 (fall 2003) • Initial feedback on individual student profiles and class trends has been provided to classroom teachers and principals in every P-9 school in the HRSB (September to November) • Literacy Co-ordinators have begun their work in all Phase One Schools Planning for Improvement • A Publisher Display was arranged and Literacy Co-ordinators selected student reading resources for their schools based student assessment data • Mathematics assessments, based on the seven strands in the provincial curriculum, are on-going for all HRSB students in grades 3 and 9 (fall 2003). • Reading Recovery is being implemented in 49 schools including all Phase One Schools Planning for Improvement • 4 Teacher Leaders in Training from MSVU/Canadian Institute of Reading Recovery ™ are providing additional reading recovery service to students in three additional schools: 2 at Basinview School, 1 at St. Joseph's A. MacKay School and 1 at Hillside Park School. • 2 HRSB staff Reading Recovery ™ Teacher Leaders are engaged in training groups with HRSB teachers (11 teachers in training meet every second week, 15 trained teachers meet for on-going professional development once a month, 8 trained teachers preparing to return to Reading Recovery meet every two weeks, and an additional 15 trained teachers meet monthly for ongoing professional development • Dr. Barbara Watson, Director of Reading Recovery, University of Auckland, came to HRSB (fall 2003) to work with our Reading Recovery teachers and our Teacher Leaders • Many of our teachers attended the Atlantic Reading Recovery™ Conference (spring 2003)

Goal #2 ***To promote positive race relations, cross cultural understanding, human rights and mutual respect among students, staff and communities.***

Priorities 2003-2004	**Achievements 2003-2004**
Priority #1 Make appropriate levels of resources available to marginalized students to ensure that they are able to achieve their learning outcomes.	• Training has been provided (October and November) to teams from every HRSB school for the implementation of the Supporting Student Success document by the Board Leadership team • Training in Individual Program Plan development has been offered (November) to all teachers new to Resource or Learning Centre roles • Support for planning student transitions and for students with autism is being provided through provincial pilot projects funded through "Learning for Life". • 5 new Learning Centre positions and three additional Speech Language Pathologists are being provided through the provincial Core Services Initiative. • After school training in behavioural programming is being provided for Psychologists and Behaviour Specialists within the Board. • Revised assessment materials have been provided to Psychologists and Speech Language Pathologists to ensure student assessments are completed with appropriate tools.
Priority #2 Assist schools in developing strategies to eliminate racism, sexism, ableism, classism, elitism, and homophobia in the classroom.	• RCH Junior/Senior High Resource Collection for students and teachers is now being housed at the Dartmouth Teacher's Centre and is being catalogued and shelved. • The Board is now a member of PAR (Partners Against Racism), a non-profit organization involved in planning and the delivery of two events (December 10, National Human Rights Day, and March 21, International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) in which many HRSB students will participate. • Job descriptions have been drafted in consultation with community members, and co-ordination has been provided to hire three

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
	student support workers funded by the DOE to work in six HRSB schools. • Student support workers have participated in personal professional development activities (Multicultural Conference-Holiday Inn Harbourview, Afrocentric Workshop – Graham Creighton Junior High School) • School Protocol for reporting RCH and sexual harassment incidents has been completed and provided to schools reflecting the responsibilities of and support from the Human Resource Services, School Administration and Program Departments of the Board. • Board staff are contributing to the Department of Education initiative related to voluntary identification and classification of different ethnocultural groups.

Goal #3 ***To ensure all learning and working environments are safe and supportive.***

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #1 Focus on student health and safety by continued support of programs such as the Safe Schools Initiative, Breakfast for Success, Anti-bullying, Peaceful Schools, and Peer Mediation.	• A full time position has been dedicated to the Safe Schools initiative and the Consultant, Community-Based Education Support, is now a permanent position • An Anti-Bullying Calendar was created, as well as a Parent Brochure on Anti-Bullying • Recent Bully research and support materials were distributed – books for grade 1 and 2; novels at junior high • Posters are being developed on Anti-Bullying • Workshops are being held at junior high schools on anti-bullying • Teacher workshops are being held at all levels on positive school climate • Teacher training is continuing on peer mediation and experiential education • Workshop for Guidance Counsellors on Actions to Anger • Lions Quest training is continuing for elementary schools • A high school peer led conflict resolution

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
	program is being developed • Risk Watch materials have been delivered to junior high schools • School Evacuation procedures are being developed for special needs students • Tobacco-free schools and work place stickers have been created and delivered to all schools and offices • Teen Health Centres have been established in all 16 high schools • 35 Breakfast Programs are operating in HRSB schools • The NS Lighthouse Walking Tour ties physical fitness to learning and is being piloted in 20 schools • Support to schools attempting to develop Healthy Foods programs in schools • Peaceful Schools banners have been awarded to schools
Priority #2 Develop a strategy to assure the HRSB that all parents are aware of the Parent Concern Protocol and implement a process to measure its effectiveness.	• Parent Concern Protocol is on the website • A session with principals was held on using the Parent Concern Protocol • Every Parent Concern is investigated and a written response provided • The Parent Concern Protocol is being updated to reflect the new organization structure • Parent Concern Protocols is a topic for School Advisory Councils at the local SAC meetings • An insert is being developed for principals to include in their school newsletters

Goal #4 ***To ensure our facilities are sound, secure and healthy and support effective curriculum delivery.***

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #1 Undertake a board-wide capital planning and facilities renewal review, with cost-sharing from the Department of Education, to establish an inventory of capital facility repair and renewal priorities.	• Formation of School Facilities Committee • D.O.E. announcements for new school construction and facility upgrades • Compilation of capital project requests from schools based on individual school submissions and mechanical system review

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #2 Implement and direct resources to a school-focused service delivery model for operating maintenance services based on input from staff, students, SACs and parents.	• Work is beginning on identifying a short and long term plan for facilities renewal based on the input from schools, facilities department staff and ongoing enrollment projections. • Implementation of Megamation Work Order system. • Additional funding from HRSB surplus (2002-03), has allowed the School Facilities department to respond to school requests in a much more timely manner. • Capital requests from schools have been compiled with an additional updated request due in December 2003 which will provide the data upon which to formulate short and long term priorities.

Goal #5 ***To allocate resources equitably among urban, rural and inner-city learning communities.***

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #1 Establish a shared understanding and definition of equitable and determine where the largest areas of inequity are with a focus on student needs versus regional boundaries.	• All staffing and resource allocations (book bureau, staffing support, specialists and supplementary funds) are administered by one team • School Based Supplies and Materials budgets are based on population but weighted for level and individual circumstances such as rural and inner city • ESL support has increased in both cities and county • Staffing has been verified in every school • Planning for Improvement data is being gathered and will allow resource allocations to reflect this data • All principals were given a presentation on the change in allocations being based on student needs • School Profiles will be used to allocate resources equitably • Book Bureau funds have been allocated based on student needs

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
	• Schools with multiple sites have received extra support from the Book Bureau allocation to address their needs • Student Support Workers were hired and allocated based on data
Priority #2 Provide technology infrastructure, hardware and support to schools for effective curriculum delivery with an emphasis on promoting the development of distance education options for HRSB students.	• IT Support continued to provide quality services to schools and offices, installed 5 new high school computer labs (125 computers) • Installed 70 new school secretary computers • Coordinated the relocation of technology from Area offices and setting up 80 new office spaces at the Gordon Bell Building with computer and telecommunication technology • Coordinated the set up of Halifax West High School and its 500 computers, 60 network laser printers, 60 LCD projectors and 3 Novell file servers • Repaired and installed 920 recycled computers in schools • The IEIE project funded the following technology in grades 4 – 6 classrooms: - 550 Pentium 4 com puter systems with curriculum software - Each elementary school will receive a digital still camera • FLECs offers online components of courses using a restricted number of seats in WebCt. FLECs staff developed units in Economics 12, English 12, Global Geography 12, Law 12, Global History 12, Oceans 11, Political Science 12 and Sociology 12. • A Digital Art course is offered to students at Musquodoboit Rural High School during the first semester and Duncan MacMillan High School during the second semester.
Priority #3 Partner with the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to advocate for amendments to the Municipal Government Act and work toward an agreement with HRM to increase supplementary funding and to distribute it equitably among HRSB students.	• A Supplementary Fund business plan was prepared for HRM Council for the 2003-04 fiscal year. The Board followed the HRM process and template and presented this plan to Council in March 2003

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
	• The HRSB was unsuccessful in obtaining HRM approval of the proposed business plan. As well, the approved supplementary funding remained at the same amounts as the previous year and was insufficient to address confirmed cost drivers • In the spring of 2003, the HRSB created a Supplementary Fund Task Force, chaired by Board Member Doug Sparks. This group has prepared a draft discussion paper on Supplementary Funding issues to present to HRM Council with a view to working collaboratively on solutions to the Board's funding issues.

Goal #6 ***To utilize community resources and partnerships to support student learning.***

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #1 Determine current levels of public support and confidence in HRSB schools and work with education, community, and business partners to develop strategies to enhance students and community volunteerism and to assist schools in improving school, home and community relations.	• Consultant, Community-Based Education, hired as a full time staff person • The Superintendent's Advisory Councils with SAC's, RCH and students were created • Good news stories in the media • Letters home from Superintendent • Planning for Improvement surveys will allow us to measure public support at the school level • Schools are running individual volunteer programs (Prince Andrew, Sir John A., etc.) • Lead and Achieve meetings facilitated and attended by HRSB staff so that information could be obtained regarding public support or concerns • Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program in schools • Student Protection Policy developed • Volunteer protocols being implemented regarding Criminal Checks and Child Abuse • Protocols have been developed for working with outside agencies (i.e. residential facilities, health providers, etc).

Priorities 2003-2004	Achievements 2003-2004
Priority #2 Establish community and business partnerships that further the Board's commitment to improve student achievement.	• Partnership with Capital District Health Association to provide Youth Health Centres in all 16 high schools • Partnership with Tim Horton's and the Mooseheads on the "Stick to Reading Program" • Halifax Assistance foundation support for schools with the current "cookie" program • Big Brothers Big Sisters Mentoring Program • Financial support from businesses for Breakfast for Learning • Partnership is continuing with EXXON Mobil and Joseph Howe School • Partnership with Sobey's on Anti-Bullying calendar • Partnership with Crime Prevention Association of Nova Scotia • A grant application has been submitted to National Crime Prevention Strategy • Collaboration with HRM Fire Department, Police and RCMP on issues around school safety • Application submitted to Halifax Assistance Fund

GOALS

The goals of the Halifax Regional School Board were developed through a consultative process involving staff and Board members. These goals were reaffirmed by the Board members at a Business Planning Workshop on November 4. 2003. The goals are based on the premise that every student can learn and every school can improve.

The goals of the Halifax Regional School Board are:

1. To improve student achievement.
2. To promote positive race relations, cross cultural understanding, human rights and mutual respect among students, staff and communities.
3. To ensure all learning and working environments are safe and supportive.
4. To ensure our facilities are sound, secure and healthy and they support effective curriculum delivery.

5. To allocate resources equitably among urban, rural and inner-city learning communities.

6. To utilize community resources and partnerships to support student learning.

PRIORITIES FOR 2004-2005

The priorities for 2004-2005 have also been developed through a workshop process between staff and Board members.

The priorities continue to reflect the focus on student learning and school improvement. These priorities will be considered during the 2004-2005 budget process and modified accordingly based on available resources. The Board will also be involved in implementing the initiatives of the Department of Education as outlined in the 2004-2005 budget.

The priorities within the General Fund for 2004-2005 are:

Goal #1 *To improve student achievement.*

Priority #1 Implement and support a board-wide framework for Planning for Improvement that is based on the collection and use of reliable data on student achievement.

Priority #2 Direct additional resources to Reading Recovery and P-12 literacy and mathematics initiatives.

Goal #2 *To promote positive race relations, cross cultural understanding, human rights and mutual respect among students, staff and communities.*

Priority #1 Make appropriate levels of resources available to marginalized students to ensure that they are able to achieve their learning outcomes.

Priority #2 Assist schools in developing strategies to eliminate racism, sexism, ableism, classism, elitism, and homophobia in the classroom.

Priority #3 Create meaningful relationships with those communities, i.e. African Nova Scotian, in developing strategies to improve the social and academic success of learners.

Goal #3	***To ensure all learning and working environments are safe and supportive.***

Priority #1 Focus on student health and safety through support of programs such as the Safe Schools Initiative, Breakfast for Success, Anti-bullying, Peaceful Schools, Peer Mediation, and Youth Health Centres.

Priority #2 Review the Parent Concern Protocol policy to make it easier for parents to use, and develop strategies to implement and evaluate its effectiveness.

Goal #4	***To ensure our facilities are sound, secure and healthy and support effective curriculum delivery.***

Priority #1 Undertake a board-wide capital planning and facilities renewal review to establish an inventory of capital facility repair, program needs and renewal priorities.

Priority #2 Direct resources to the school-focused service delivery model for operating maintenance services.

Goal #5	***To allocate resources equitably among urban, rural and inner-city learning communities.***

Priority #1 Establish a shared understanding and definition of equitable and determine where the largest areas of inequity are with a focus on student needs versus regional boundaries.

Priority #2 Provide technology infrastructure, hardware and support to schools for effective curriculum delivery with an emphasis on promoting the development of distance education options for HRSB students.

Priority #3 Work with the Province and HRM on appropriate funding arrangements that will permit equitable distribution of resources throughout the region.

Goal #6	***To utilize community resources and partnerships to support student learning.***

Priority #1 Increase levels of public support and confidence in HRSB schools by assisting schools in improving school, home and community relations.

Priority #2 Establish community and business partnerships that further the Board's commitment to improve student achievement.

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005

FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

A. Key Financial Indicators

GENERAL FUND

	2002-03 ACTUAL	2003-04 PROJECTION (Note 1)	2004-05 BUDGET
REVENUE			
Province of Nova Scotia	$218,708,928	$225,851,100	
Halifax Regional Municipality	63,725,904	67,600,300	
Government of Canada	1,291,522	1,173,100	
Board Generated Revenues	697,706	732,300	
TOTAL REVENUE	**$284,424,060**	**$295,356,800**	
EXPENDITURES			
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION			
Salaries - Teachers	$177,338,375	$182,650,500	
Salaries - Non-Teachers	16,757,171	18,801,100	
Benefits	18,574,031	16,246,200	
Special Education	35,451	25,000	
Program Support Resources	8,474,320	8,210,200	
Administration	145,133	86,800	
Professional Development	113,182	159,700	
International Students **(net revenue)**	-129,229	-261,400	
Adult and Community Education	611,734	842,500	
TOTAL - SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION	**$221,920,168**	**$226,760,600**	
PROGRAM			
Salaries - Teachers	$3,136,425	$5,441,100	
Salaries - Non-Teachers	300,435	374,700	
Benefits	223,310	401,800	
Special Education & Student Support	224,531	1,197,800	
Program Support Resources	336,695	411,200	
Administration	86,951	166,400	
Professional Development	1,177,571	2,061,200	
TOTAL - PROGRAM	**$5,485,918**	**$10,054,200**	
BOARD SERVICES			
Board Governance	$362,026	$352,800	
Board Services	1,663,390	2,092,100	
TOTAL – BOARD SERVICES	**$2,025,416**	**$2,444,900**	
SCHOOL FACILITIES			
Administration	$1,242,838	$1,589,400	
Custodial Services	15,104,058	16,211,300	
Maintenance Services	6,095,757	6,227,300	
Plant Operations	9,038,390	9,932,000	
Capital Projects/Minor Repairs & Renovations	3,288,940	3,170,900	
TOTAL – SCHOOL FACILITIES	**$34,769,983**	**$37,130,900**	

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005

	2002-03 ACTUAL	2003-04 PROJECTION (Note 1)	2004-05 BUDGET
FINANCIAL SERVICES			
Administration	$2,251,576	$2,464,400	
Student Transportation	11,737,892	11,655,300	
Technology Services	1,639,454	1,775,700	
EXCEL **(net revenue)**	-526,382	-219,000	
Facilities Rental **(net revenue)**	-162,095	-26,600	
Adult ESL **(net revenue)**	0	0	
TOTAL- FINANCIAL SERVICES	**$14,940,445**	**$15,649,800**	
HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES			
Administration	$1,950284	$1,704,700	
NSTU Professional Development	1,757,560	1,600,000	
Summer School **(net revenue)**	-22,692	-5,000	
Other Projects **(net revenue)**	15,769	16,700	
TOTAL – HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES	**$3,700,921**	**$3,316,400**	
ADMIN ALLOCATION TO SUPP FUND	-396,000	0	
GRAND TOTAL - EXPENDITURES	**$282,446,851**	**$295,356,800**	
Excess of Revenues over Expenditures	**$1,977,209**		
Transfer from Reserve	**857,170**		
Transfer to Reserve	**-2,834,379**		
NET SURPLUS	**$0**	**$0**	

Additional General Fund Expenditure Information

	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Projection	2004-05 Budget
EXPENDITURES			
Salaries and Benefits			
Board/School Administration	$27,781,606	$30,256,200	
Instruction	175,061,553	178,479,000	
Instructional Support	18,017,991	20,881,300	
Support Staff	15,375,322	16,924,200	
Property Services (excl. salaries)	19,465,894	19,700,000	
Transportation (excl. salaries)	11,737,892	11,655,300	
Other	15,006,593	17,460,800	
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	**$282,446,851**	**$295,356,800**	

Note 1 - ***The 2003-04 PROJECTIONS do not include the provincial funding reductions or the impact of surplus funds from last year. These will be incorporated into the final approved business plan for 2004-2005.***

Administration

For the purposes of this business plan and budget, "Administration" is defined as:

> **"Any expenditure that does not *directly* benefit the school building or the student body."**

The key to this definition is the word "directly". This means that the teachers and maintenance staff are not included as administration, but the Human Resource Services department is included. The teaching staff provide a direct benefit to the student body. Human Resource Services, on the other hand, provide a benefit to the school staff, but not directly to the students. In the same light, the managers of the School Facilities Department are administration, but the maintenance trade employees are not.

Using this definition, the Administration expenditures are:

	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Projection	2004-05 Budget	
Board Services	$1,663,882	$2,092,100		**Note 1**
Financial Services	1,952,739	2,088,400		**Note 2**
School Facilities	1,242,838	1,589,400		
Technology Services	1,639,454	1,775,700		
Non-Admin Technology Costs	-1,161,941	<1,226,800>		**Note 3**
Human Resource Services	1,774,980	1,514,700		**Note 4**
TOTAL	**$7,111,952**	**$7,833,500**		

Note 1: The Board Services expenditure cost does not include the Board Members.
Note 2: This amount excludes Liability Insurance.
Note 3: Technology Services expenditures, which are not considered administration, include School Computer Supplies, O'Connell Drive Refresh, IEI Non Salary Expenses, Travel, and Salaries and Benefits for the technicians.
Note 4: This amount excludes Pension Top Ups.

The Total Gross Expenditure amounts, excluding transfers to reserves, are:

	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Projection	2004-05 Budget
General Fund	$286,533,730	$298,626,200	
Supplementary – Halifax	12,244,431	12,295,800	
Supplementary – Dartmouth	5,259,193	5,239,200	
Supplementary – County	3,307,410	3,312,000	
TOTAL	**$307,344,765**	**$319,473,200**	

	2002-03 Actual	2003-04 Projection	2004-05 Budget
Administration as % of Total Expenditures	2.31%	2.45%	

B. Cost Pressures

Teachers' Salaries and Benefits

Teachers' salaries and benefits comprise the largest component of the Halifax Regional School Board budget. During the winter of 2003, the Province completed a new collective agreement with the Nova Scotia Teachers Union. This agreement governs the salaries and benefits paid by school boards to teachers.

Salary increases were awarded to teachers of 1.5% effective August 1, 2004, and 2% effective January 1, 2005. This increases teachers' salaries by approximately 3.53% in 2004-05.

Based on the current staff complement, the Halifax Regional School Board is projecting cost pressures of over $1.7 million for license upgrades and step increases.

The substitute rates of pay will also increase as of August 1, 2004 and January 1, 2005, and our projection is an increase of about $400,000 for the fiscal year.

Non-Teacher Salaries and Benefits

As of November 2003, none of the non-teaching agreements are in place for 2004-2005. The NSGEU agreement expired March 31, 2003. The CUPE agreement expired July 31, 2003, and the NSUPE agreement will expire on July 31, 2004.

All permanent non-teacher employee groups participate in the HRM pension plan, with a current contribution rate of 6.75%. This contribution rate is expected to increase to 8.25% effective April 1, 2004. This results in a 22% increase to our pension costs.

Other

Other significant cost pressures include:

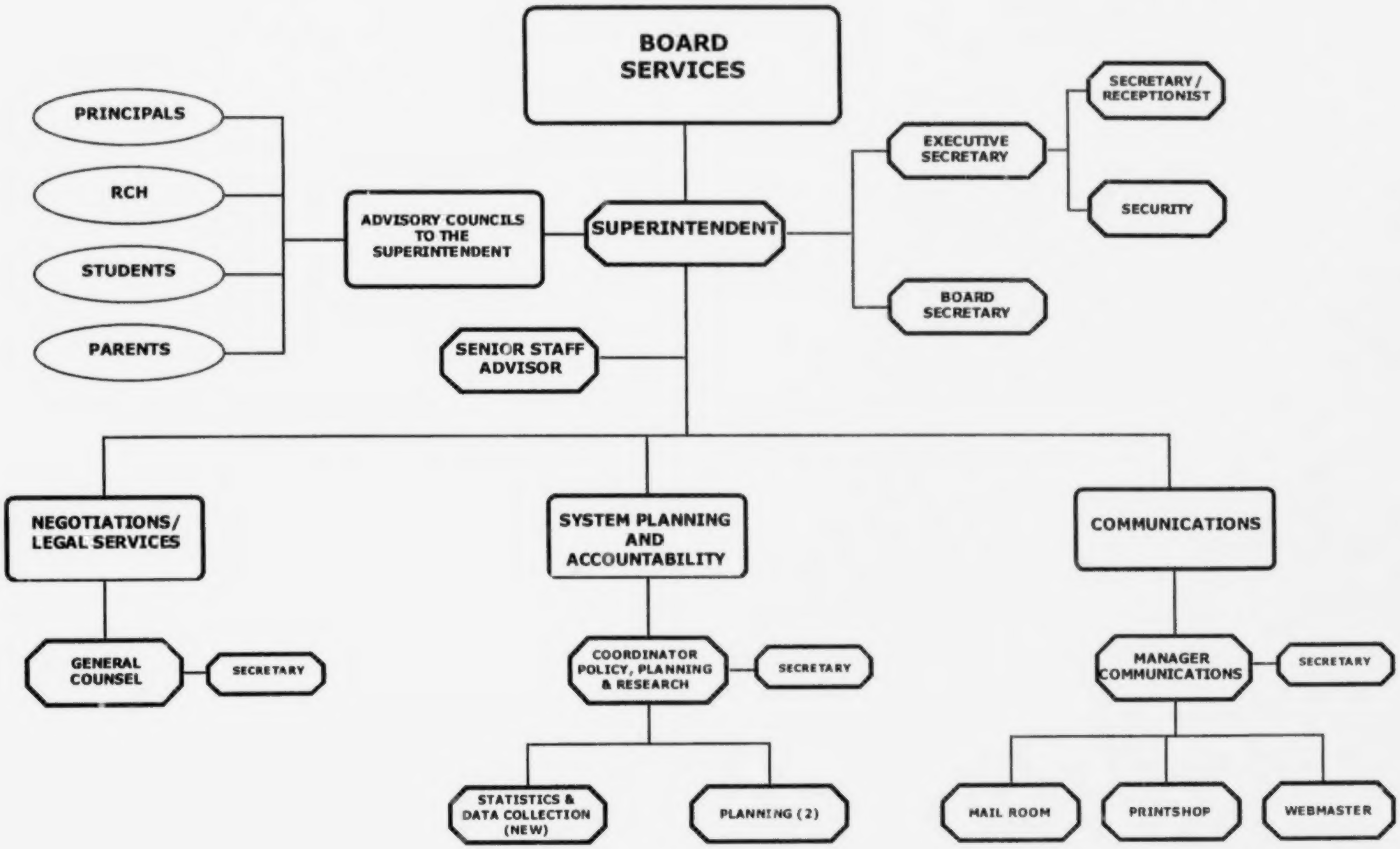
Insurance	-	the Board expects to receive notification of a premium increase, prior to the finalization of the 2004-2005 business plan
Capital Projects	-	the Board anticipates a required increase of $1 million in the capital budget to address deferred maintenance issues
Transportation	-	the contractual increases, as well as required additional busses, indicate a need for an additional $166,000 in this budget
Technology	-	recently renegotiated contracts between the Province and Aliant have resulted in an $18,000 per month increase for data line charges to schools. This is a 75% increase over our costs in 2003-2004.

In summary, the Board faces salary and benefit cost increases resulting from collective agreements that must be recognized and funded. The Board continues to face non-salary cost increases due to rising prices for such goods and services (mainly operations and transportation) that typically do not receive full recognition in the funding review process and for new program implementation. The Board will ensure such costs are recognized in the budget process and update the cost pressures as they become known, subject to final approval of the General Fund Business Plan and Budget.

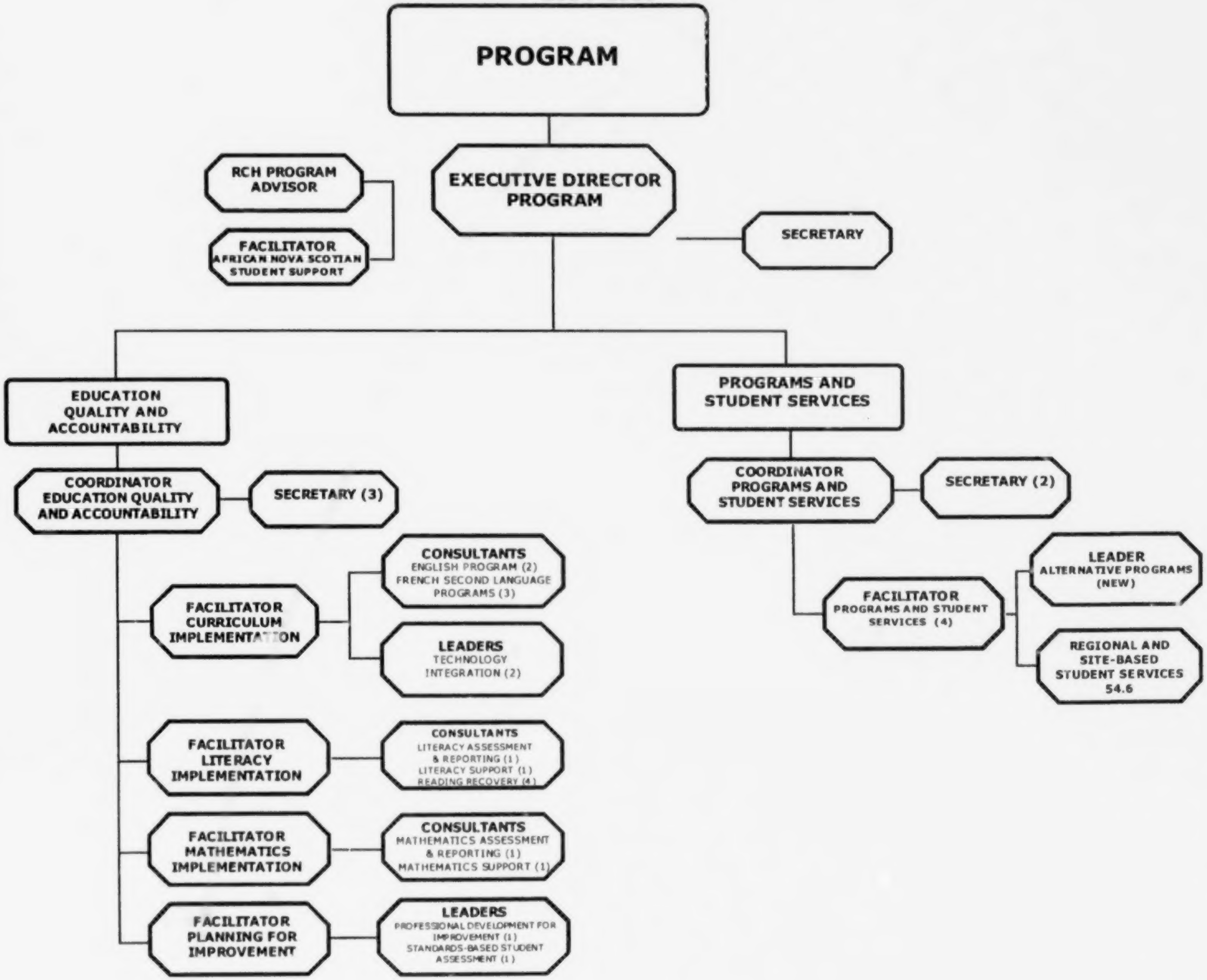
Halifax Regional
School Board

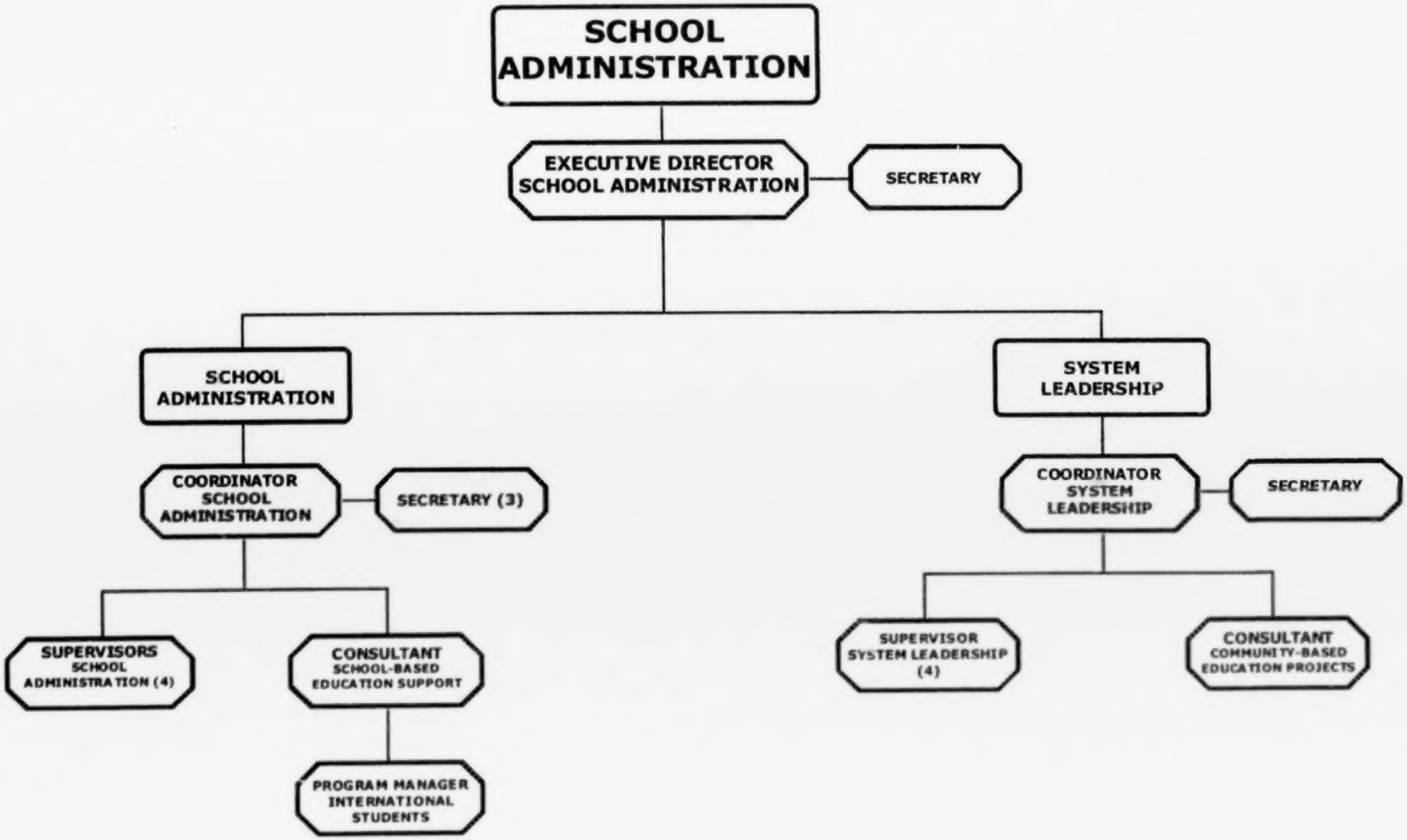
Organizational
Structure
April 2003

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005

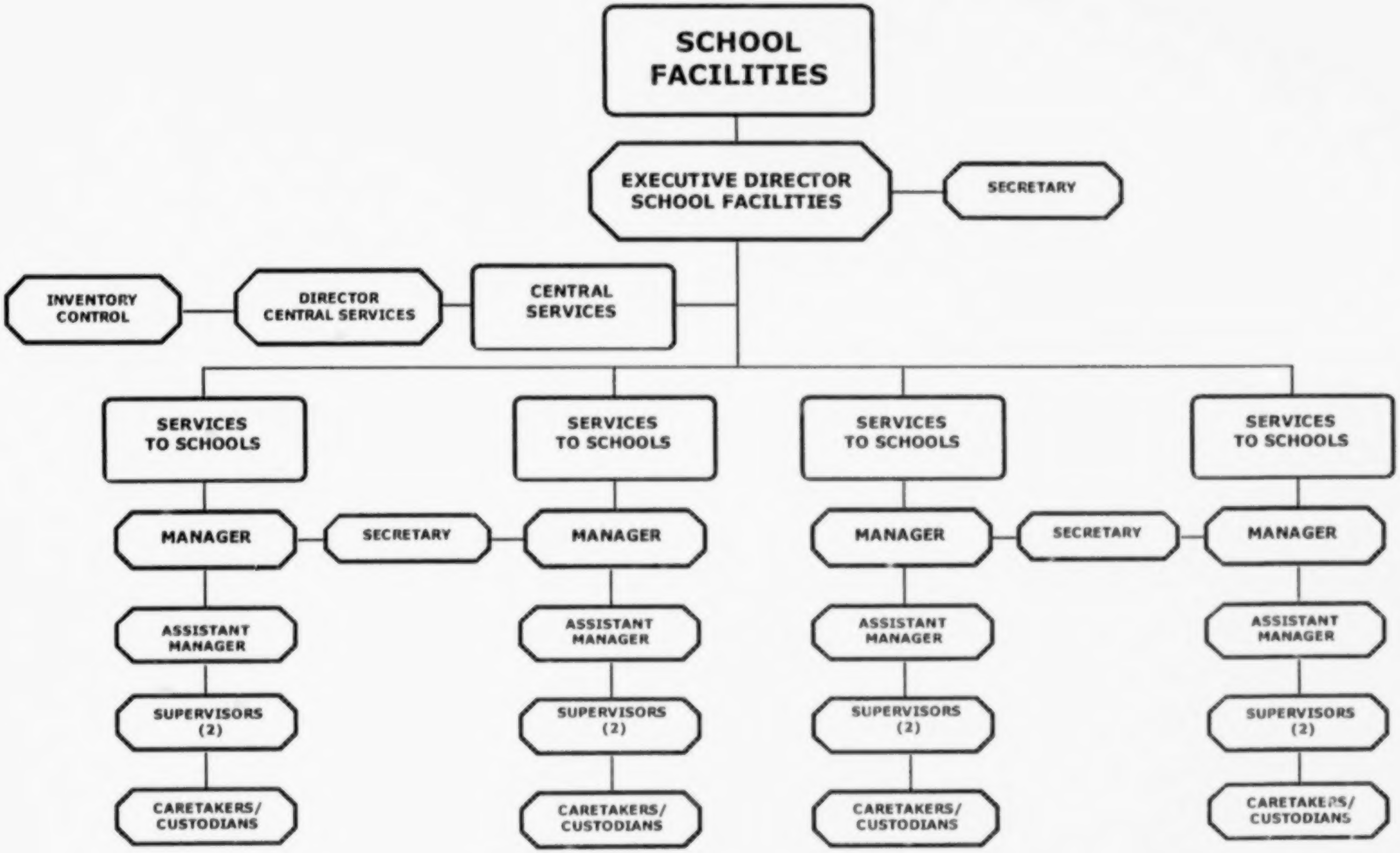

BOARD SERVICES
PRINCIPALS
RCH
STUDENTS
PARENTS
ADVISORY COUNCILS TO THE SUPERINTENDENT
SUPERINTENDENT
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
SECRETARY / RECEPTIONIST
SECURITY
BOARD SECRETARY
SENIOR STAFF ADVISOR
NEGOTIATIONS/ LEGAL SERVICES
GENERAL COUNSEL
SECRETARY
SYSTEM PLANNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY
COORDINATOR POLICY, PLANNING & RESEARCH
SECRETARY
STATISTICS & DATA COLLECTION (NEW)
PLANNING (2)
COMMUNICATIONS
MANAGER COMMUNICATIONS
SECRETARY
MAIL ROOM
PRINTSHOP
WEBMASTER

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005


PROGRAM
RCH PROGRAM ADVISOR
FACILITATOR AFRICAN NOVA SCOTIAN STUDENT SUPPORT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR PROGRAM
SECRETARY
EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
COORDINATOR EDUCATION QUALITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY
SECRETARY (3)
FACILITATOR CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION
CONSULTANTS ENGLISH PROGRAM (2) FRENCH SECOND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS (3)
LEADERS TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION (2)
FACILITATOR LITERACY IMPLEMENTATION
CONSULTANTS LITERACY ASSESSMENT & REPORTING (1) LITERACY SUPPORT (1) READING RECOVERY (4)
FACILITATOR MATHEMATICS IMPLEMENTATION
CONSULTANTS MATHEMATICS ASSESSMENT & REPORTING (1) MATHEMATICS SUPPORT (1)
FACILITATOR PLANNING FOR IMPROVEMENT
LEADERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR IMPROVEMENT (1) STANDARDS-BASED STUDENT ASSESSMENT (1)
PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES
COORDINATOR PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES
SECRETARY (2)
FACILITATOR PROGRAMS AND STUDENT SERVICES (4)
LEADER ALTERNATIVE PROGRAMS (NEW)
REGIONAL AND SITE-BASED STUDENT SERVICES 54.6

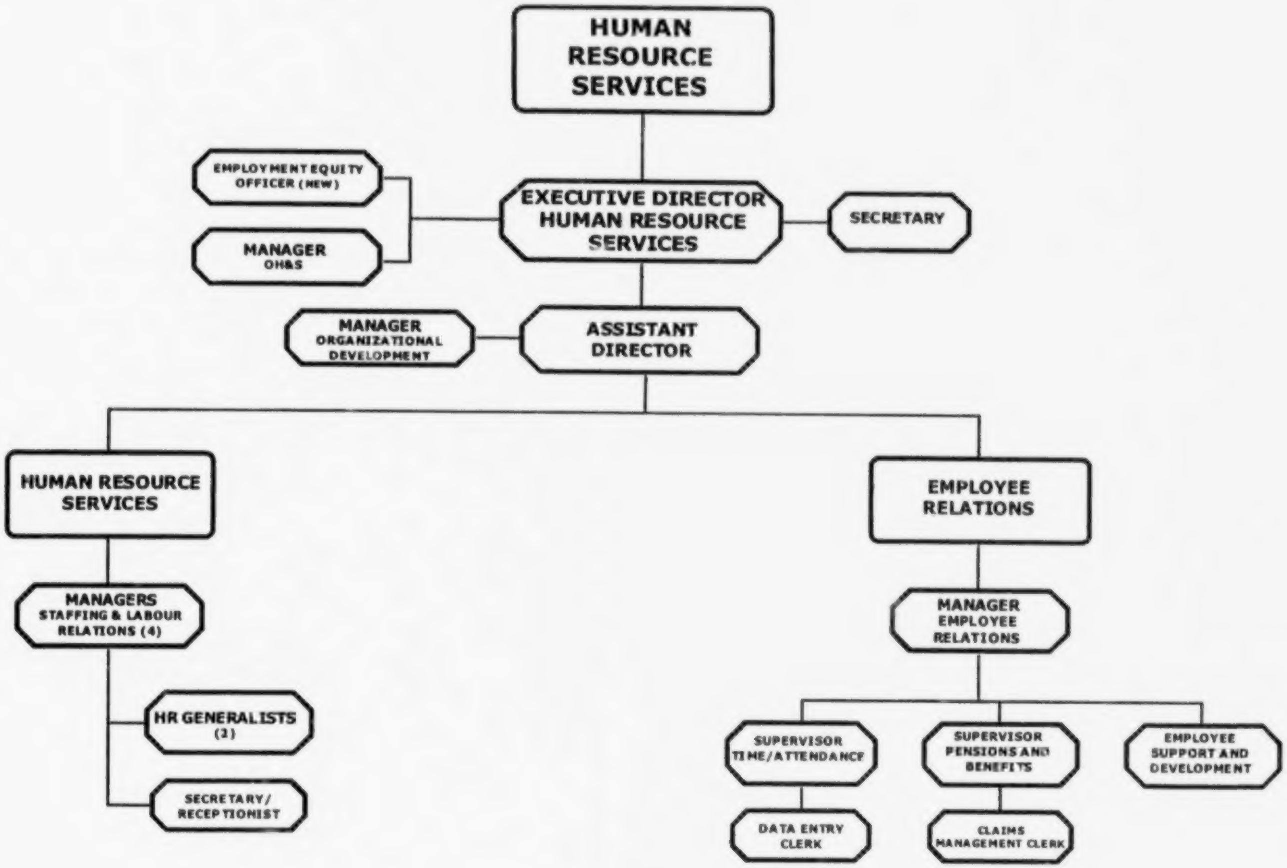

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
SECRETARY
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
COORDINATOR SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION
SECRETARY (3)
SUPERVISORS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION (4)
CONSULTANT SCHOOL-BASED EDUCATION SUPPORT
PROGRAM MANAGER INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
SYSTEM LEADERSHIP
COORDINATOR SYSTEM LEADERSHIP
SECRETARY
SUPERVISOR SYSTEM LEADERSHIP (4)
CONSULTANT COMMUNITY-BASED EDUCATION PROJECTS

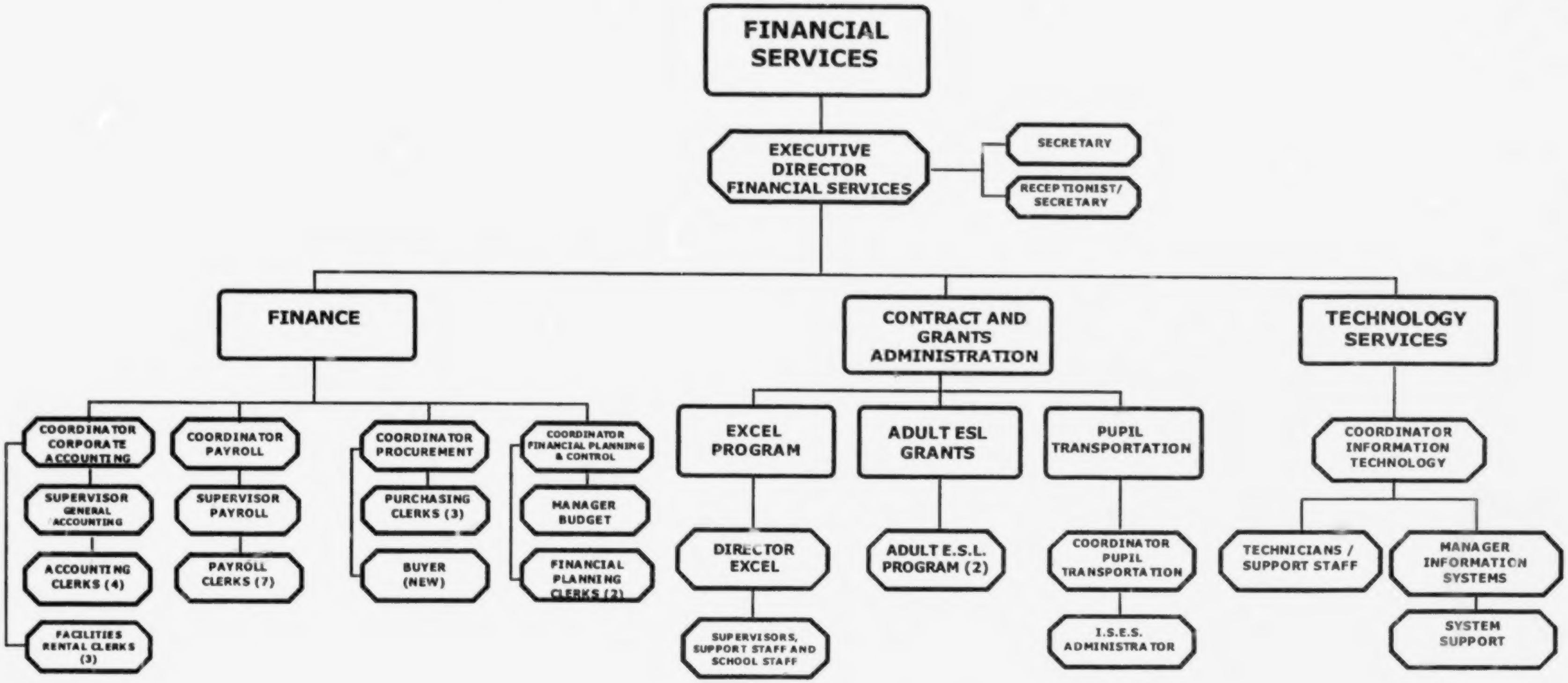
HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005


SCHOOL FACILITIES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR SCHOOL FACILITIES
SECRETARY
CENTRAL SERVICES
DIRECTOR CENTRAL SERVICES
INVENTORY CONTROL
SERVICES TO SCHOOLS
SERVICES TO SCHOOLS
SERVICES TO SCHOOLS
SERVICES TO SCHOOLS
MANAGER
SECRETARY
MANAGER
MANAGER
SECRETARY
MANAGER
ASSISTANT MANAGER
ASSISTANT MANAGER
ASSISTANT MANAGER
ASSISTANT MANAGER
SUPERVISORS (2)
SUPERVISORS (2)
SUPERVISORS (2)
SUPERVISORS (2)
CARETAKERS/ CUSTODIANS
CARETAKERS/ CUSTODIANS
CARETAKERS/ CUSTODIANS
CARETAKERS/ CUSTODIANS

**MAINTENANCE STAFF 48 F.T.E.'S
TO SERVE ALL AREAS OF THE BOARD AND CENTRAL SERVICES
TO ALLOW FOR COVERAGE OF ALL REQUIRED SHIFTS.**

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005


HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES
EMPLOYMENT EQUITY OFFICER (NEW)
MANAGER OH&S
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES
SECRETARY
MANAGER ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES
MANAGERS STAFFING & LABOUR RELATIONS (4)
HR GENERALISTS (2)
SECRETARY/ RECEPTIONIST
EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
MANAGER EMPLOYEE RELATIONS
SUPERVISOR TIME/ATTENDANCE
DATA ENTRY CLERK
SUPERVISOR PENSIONS AND BENEFITS
CLAIMS MANAGEMENT CLERK
EMPLOYEE SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT


FINANCIAL SERVICES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINANCIAL SERVICES
SECRETARY
RECEPTIONIST/ SECRETARY
FINANCE
COORDINATOR CORPORATE ACCOUNTING
SUPERVISOR GENERAL ACCOUNTING
ACCOUNTING CLERKS (4)
FACILITIES RENTAL CLERKS (3)
COORDINATOR PAYROLL
SUPERVISOR PAYROLL
PAYROLL CLERKS (7)
COORDINATOR PROCUREMENT
PURCHASING CLERKS (3)
BUYER (NEW)
COORDINATOR FINANCIAL PLANNING & CONTROL
MANAGER BUDGET
FINANCIAL PLANNING CLERKS (2)
CONTRACT AND GRANTS ADMINISTRATION
EXCEL PROGRAM
DIRECTOR EXCEL
SUPERVISORS, SUPPORT STAFF AND SCHOOL STAFF
ADULT ESL GRANTS
ADULT E.S.L. PROGRAM (2)
PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
COORDINATOR PUPIL TRANSPORTATION
I.S.E.S. ADMINISTRATOR
TECHNOLOGY SERVICES
COORDINATOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
TECHNICIANS / SUPPORT STAFF
MANAGER INFORMATION SYSTEMS
SYSTEM SUPPORT

Appendix B - Key Facts

The following list of key facts were based on a list developed by the school boards for their 2002-03 business plans. School boards are to report on each item if the information is available, if the information is not available indcate by putting a N/A.

Key Fact Categories

	Previous Year 2002-03	Current Year 2003-04
Students		
Total Number of Students	56,965	56,498
Average Class Size P-2		23.0
Average Class Size 3-6		24.8
Average Class Size 7-9	26.5	26.4
Average Section Size 10-12	N/A	N/A
Total Number of Classes & Sections		N/A
Teachers		
Instruction FTE's	2654.6	2658.9
Administrative FTE's	197.6	197.4
Resource FTE's	153.6	150.5
Student Support FTE's	141.1	147.0
Program Support FTE's	N/A	34.95
School Support Staff		
Education Assistants	455.15	449.1
Library Technicians	7.0	7.0
Student Supervision – Lunch & Bus		407.5
School Secretaries	144.2	143.6
Student Support Workers	N/A	3.0
Board Governance		
School Board Members	14	15 (including student advisor)
Board Support Staff FTE's	1	1

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
GENERAL FUND BUSINESS PLAN
2004-2005

	Previous Year 2002-03	Current Year 2003-04
Regional Administration		
Senior Management FTE's	12.0	10.0
Program Management FTE's	30.3	40.0
Operational Management FTE's	42.0	44.0
Administrative Support FTE's	4.0	4.0
Secretarial/Clerical FTE's	45.0	43.0
Technology		
Students/Instructional Computer	5.79	5.25
Technical Support FTE's	19.0	19.0
Computers/Technician	573.0	595.0
Property Services		
Total School Sq. Ft.	7,324,897	7,324,897
Sq. Ft./Student	128.6	129.6
Maintained Sq. Ft.	6,634,088	6,634,088
Private Operator Sq. Ft.	690,809	690,809
Operating Cost/Sq. Ft.	$4.75	$5.12
Board Custodial/Sq. Ft.	21,215	21,215
Con. Custodial/Sq. Ft.	$4.70	$4.70
Board Operating Capital	$3,288,940	$3,170,900
Transportation		
Total Buses Operated	220	221
Total Students Transported	21,718	22.160
Total Cost/Student Transported	$533	$529
Average Bus Load	100	100
Cost/Unit - Contracted	$44,044 (Avg. cost school bus per year)	$48,037 (Avg. cost school bus per year)
Cost/Unit - Board	Not applicable	Not applicable
Number of Operating Days	185 (Allows for 5 storm days)	185 (Allows for 5 storm days)

Definitions and Calculation:

Students:

Total Number of Students: Sept. 30th Total Enrolment (funded & unfunded)
Average Class Size P-2: Sept. 30th Statistics
Average Class Size 3-6: Sept. 30th Statistics
Average Class Size 7-9: Sept. 30th Statistics
Average Section Size 10-12: Sept. 30th Statistics
Total Number of Classes & Sections: Sept. 30th Statistics

Teachers:

Instruction FTE's: All teaching staff delivering programs to students
Administrative FTE's: Principals and Vice Principals (no Department heads)
Resource FTE's: Resource Teacher Allocation
Students Support FTE's: Prog. Adv./Speech Lang. Path./L.D. Specialists/Guidance/Etc.
Program Support FTE's: Program Consultants

School Support Staff:

Education Assistants: Total hours of services per day and number of days paid
Library Technicians: Total hours of services per day and number of days paid
Student Supervision - Lunch & Bus: Total hours of services per day and number of days paid
School Secretaries: Total hours of services per day and number of days paid
Student support Workers: Total hours of services per day and number of days paid

Board Governance:

Number of School Board Members
Board Secretary – Record Secretary

Regional Administration:

Senior Management FTE's: Superintendent, Asst. Super, Executive Directors, Directors, Asst. Dir.
Program Management FTE's: Coordinators, Supervisors (all program departments)
Operational Mgmt. FTE's: Coordinators, Supervisors (all operations departments incl. Fin & HR)
Admin. Support FTE's: Asst. Coordinators, Admin. Assistants, Communications, OH & S Officers
Secretarial & Clerical Staff

Technology:

Student/Instructional Computer: Total number of Students/Total Number of Computers Available
Technical Support FTE's: System Administrators, Technologists, Technicians
Computers/Technician: Total Computers across Board/Technical Support FTE's

Property Service:

Total School Sq. Ft.: Total square footage of all schools operated by Board
Sq. Ft./Student: Total square footage divided by Sept. 30th enrollment
Maintained Sq. Ft.: Total square footage of all schools maintained by Board
Private Operator Sq. Ft.: Total square footage of all schools maintained by Private Operators
Operating Cost/Sq. Ft.: Total operating cost/Sq. Ft. of all schools maintained by Board
Bd. Custodial/Sq. Ft.: Cust. Hours/Sq. Ft. maintained by Brd. Employed Staff divided by 8 hours
Con. Custodial/Sq. Ft.: Cost/Sq. Ft. Maintained by Contracted Staff
Board Operating Capital: Board Contribution/Sq. Ft. for operating capital expenditures

Transportation:

Total Buses Operated: Total units operated on a daily basis by Board and Contractors
Total Students Transported: Total students transported each day (counted only once)
Total Cost/Student Transported: Total transportation cost divided by students transported
Average Bus Load: Total students transported divided by total buses operated
Cost/Unit - Contracted: Annual operating cost/unit
Cost/Unit - Board: Annual operating cost/unit
Number of Operating Days: Number of days transportation system actually operated

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET

2004-2005

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INTRODUCTION/PLANNING CONTEXT

The Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) provides quality educational opportunities for students who reside within the Halifax Regional Municipality. The HRSB is once again pleased to be part of HRM's business planning and budget process.

School boards in Nova Scotia were created by the Province under provisions in the Education Act. Although a separate legal entity, the Halifax Regional School Board shares common goals and works together with the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) to create a healthy, sustainable, viable and well educated community.

It is within the framework of a shared vision with HRM for excellence in educational opportunities and student achievement that this supplementary fund business plan and budget proposal is prepared and presented to Council.

There is a long history of the former cities of Halifax and Dartmouth providing funding for public education that is above the mandatory amount directed annually by the Province. This supplementary funding has been used to enhance and augment educational programs and services to students who live in these areas. It is a matter of record that HRSB receives the lowest amount per student in funding from the Province. **Supplementary funding allows students to benefit from programs and services that would not be affordable with the general funding.**

The HRSB acknowledges that educational funding is a provincial responsibility, nonetheless, there is a mandate from the public for supplementary funding to continue and many councillors strongly support the enhanced program opportunities that are provided to students in their districts.

There is a need to address several very critical issues surrounding supplementary funding. These issues have arisen as a result of school board amalgamation in 1996. Funds continue to be raised at different amounts, at different tax rates and the funds can only be spent in certain areas of the region.

The long term vision of the HRSB is one of taxpayer equity and student equity. The HRSB believes that all taxpayers should contribute towards supplementary funding at the same tax rate and that funds raised should be distributed equally throughout the region to support all students, regardless of where they live.

This 2004-2005 Business Plan and Budget proposal is based on a phased in approach to achieve the long term vision. It is important that almost 34,000 students in the former County-Bedford receive similar benefits as the students in the former cities. The HRSB has a fundamental belief that students should not be disadvantaged based on where they live. The HRSB has an obligation to all students within HRM. It is through a staged increase in the County-Bedford supplementary funding that these 34,000 students will begin to receive equitable treatment to their city counterparts.

The HRSB has heard the statements that some of the former County-Bedford areas do not want the enhancements provided in the former cities and don't want to pay the extra taxes. School administrators who have moved from city schools to county schools have commented on numerous occasions that the lack of supplementary funds is a distinct disadvantage to these students. Conversely, administrators who have moved from county schools to city schools observe the advantages that supplementary funds give to students in terms of educational experiences and success.

The 2004-2005 budget proposal reflects the funds required to maintain the existing program enhancements currently provided to students. The major supplementary fund expenditure is teacher's salaries and the budget proposal incorporates collective agreement salary increases. If funding is not increased to reflect these cost increases, there will be a further reduction in programs and services for students.

In 2003-04, the HRSB requested increased supplementary funding to offset cost drivers in programs and services. An increase was not provided and through the final budget process, there were reductions in both staff and resources in each area. These reductions were highlighted in the 2003-04 Supplementary Fund Business Plan and Budget. There has not been an increase in supplementary funding since 2002-03, yet costs continue to increase.

There have also been discussions between HRSB and HRM officials regarding the inequity of the current provincial funding formulas. This has recently been reported by the Auditor General as well. There are plans to jointly address this matter with the Department of Education.

Resolving supplementary funding issues and provincial funding inequity is interconnected. By working together and sharing a common vision for the educational system in this municipality, **the HRSB and HRM can achieve a stable, equitable level of mandatory and supplementary funding to provide the educational opportunities and success that create a "smart city".**

2004-05 Supplementary Funding Proposal

This business plan and budget proposal reflects the funding requirements to retain existing staffing and resources in Halifax and Dartmouth. It also reflects the Board's direction to prepare a budget request for an additional $2 million in the former County-Bedford that represents the first stage of a multi-year proposal to increase the tax rate in the former County-Bedford to equal the rates in Dartmouth and Halifax. Within 3 to 5 years, the HRSB hopes to have the same tax rate for all taxpayers in HRM.

The additional funds in the County-Bedford area will be used to acquire education staff and resources that are currently available to students in the former cities. Following approval of supplementary funding for 2004-05 by Council, the HRSB will complete its formal budget process, including consultation with school communities. Council will be provided with the final approved budget later this spring.

The budget proposal is as follows:

	Funding Proposal 2004-05	Actual Funding 2003-04	Actual Funding 2002-03
Halifax	$12,664,700	$12,295,800	$12,685,800
Dartmouth	5,396,400	5,239,200	5,482,000
County-Bedford	5,312,000	3,312,000	3,612,300
	$23,373,100	$20,847,000	$21,780,100

SERVICE PLAN

Program Mission, Strategic Outcomes, and Client Benefits for existing programs and services

The Halifax Regional School Board is responsible for administering the public school system within the boundary of the Halifax Regional Municipality. The Board operates 139 schools serving almost 56,500 students.

Our mission is...

> *To ensure that each student develops passion for learning, for achieving personal success, and for building a harmonious global community.*

The belief statements that underpin this mission statement are:

- Every person has value
- Individuals are accountable for their decisions
- Honesty and respect are fundamental to healthy relationships
- Continuous learning is critical to personal growth and an enriched life
- Each person has a valuable contribution to make
- Diversity enriches
- Positive attitude is essential for personal success
- Respect for self is fundamental to respect for others

The premise for setting goals and priorities for the Halifax Regional School Board is that every student can learn and every school can improve.

In accordance with Board policy, the focus of priorities for supplementary funding is:

1. Allocations from the Supplementary Fund will be made for the purpose of augmenting and enhancing programs and services and for providing students with improved opportunities for learning.

2. The board is committed to equity for all students across the region and for equitable access to the resources provided through the existence of supplementary funds.

In accordance with the HRM business plan template, the following table highlights the strategic outcomes from having supplementary funding available for students:

STRATEGIC OUTCOMES	INDICATORS
1. Students in all HRSB schools will achieve greater success and have broader educational experiences, contributing to HRM becoming a "smart city".	# of indicators of student success on which the Board provides data to schools # of indicators of student success on which schools collect data Level of support for students requiring and receiving specialist support beyond the classroom teacher
2. Public support and confidence in HRSB schools	Satisfaction rate by respondents to survey of education, community and business partners

The second section in this template requires notation of one or more benefits to the "clients" of supplementary funding. In this case, we outline the benefits to students, however, the entire community benefits when children receive a well rounded, quality public education. The benefits to students are:

CLIENT BENEFITS	INDICATORS
1. Students in Halifax and Dartmouth receive enhanced instruction in the following program areas: ➢ Music ➢ French ➢ Physical Education ➢ Art	Instructional time in the noted program areas is greater than the time allocated through the General Fund budget.

CLIENT BENEFITS	INDICATORS
2. Students with special needs receive additional supports to allow them to succeed.	Ratio of special needs resources to students in excess of provincial averages
3. Students have increased access to professional library materials and resources.	Number of library technicians in schools
4. Students in Halifax and Dartmouth have an opportunity to participate in exemplary arts programs such as All City Music.	Number of students participating in All City Music
5. Students whose first language is not English are provided enhanced support to learn English.	Students per ESL teacher
6. Class sizes are reduced to provide a more conducive environment for student success.	Average class size
7. Schools have additional program resources to augment student achievement.	Program resources per school

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The following summarizes the current financial position for each part of the Fund:

HALIFAX

	2004-2005 Proposal	2003-2004 Budget	2002-2003 Actuals
Funding	$12,664,700	$12,295,800	$12,295,000
Prior Year Surplus	0	0	88,080
	$12,664,700	$12,295,800	$12,383,080

Expenditures			
Salaries & Benefits	$11,930,700	$11,561,800	$11,063,467
Supplies & Materials	734,000	734,000	947,373
Administration	0	0	233,592
	$12,664,700	**$12,295,800**	**$12,244,432**
Surplus	**$0**	**$0**	**$138,648**

Halifax – Budget Change Highlights

The 2004-2005 budget proposal is based on retaining the same number of staff in the 2004-2005 school year as currently in schools in 2003-2004, with the exception of an increase of 7.6 FTE additional classroom teachers to further reduce class sizes. Refer to Appendix A for the detailed list of positions by category. The budget reflects the result of negotiated salary increases for the current staff. The budget also reflects the full year impact of staff reductions that took place as of July 31, 2003.

DARTMOUTH

	2004-2005 Proposal	2003-2004 Budget	2002-2003 Actuals
Funding	$5,396,400	$5,239,200	$5,239,200
Prior Year Surplus	0	0	34,214
	$5,396,400	**$5,239,200**	**$5,273,414**
Expenditures			
Salaries & Benefits	$4,866,600	$4,778,800	$4,565,152
Supplies & Materials	453,800	388,000	519,537
Student Transportation	76,000	72,400	75,000
Administration	0	0	99,504
	$5,396,400	**$5,239,200**	**$5,259,193**
Surplus	**$0**	**$0**	**$14,221**

Dartmouth – Budget Change Highlights

The 2004-2005 budget proposal is based on retaining the same number of staff in the 2004-2005 school year as currently in schools in 2003-2004, with the exception of an increase of 4.0 FTE additional classroom teachers to further reduce class sizes. Refer to Appendix B for the detailed list of positions by category. The budget reflects the result of negotiated salary increases for the current staff. The budget also reflects the full year impact of staff reductions that took place as of July 31, 2003.

HALIFAX COUNTY-BEDFORD

	2004-2005 Proposal	2003-2004 Budget	2002-2003 Actuals
Funding	$5,312,000	$3,312,000	$3,312,000
Prior Year Deficit	0	0	<8,090>
	$5,312,000	**$3,312,000**	**$3,303,910**
Expenditures			
Salaries & Benefits	$5,312,000	$3,312,010	$3,173,817
Supplies & Materials	0	0	70,689
Administration	0	0	62,904
	$5,312,000	**$3,312,000**	**$3,307,410**
Deficit	**$0**	**$0**	**<$3,500>**

Halifax County-Bedford – Budget Change Highlights

The 2004-2005 budget proposal is based on retaining the same number of Centrally Managed staff in the 2004-2005 school year as currently in schools in 2003-2004. Refer to Appendix C for the detailed list of positions by category. The Families of Schools budget allocation is proposed to increase from $2,157,200 to $4,086,300. These funds will be budgeted in greater detail with community consultation with the intent of providing enhanced programs and services as currently provided in the 2 former cities. This will be reviewed by the Board during final budget deliberations as part of the multi-year strategy to bring student program and service equity to all regions within the HRSB.

Detailed Current Year Operating Budget – 2004-2005

Refer to Appendix A - C.

Staffing FTE's – 2004-2005

Refer to Appendix A - C.

SUMMARY OF LAST YEAR'S (2003-2004) ACHIEVEMENTS AGAINST LAST YEAR'S BUSINESS PLAN

HALIFAX

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Employ additional staffing to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio.	45.7 FTE's	Additional teaching staff means smaller class sizes that have tremendous impact on each individual child and teacher. Children have better opportunities for success because of: ➢ Enhanced learning environments ➢ Support for children who had been experiencing challenges in larger classes ➢ Increased ability to deal with students with behavioral problems.
Augment the regional level of classroom support in the areas of: ➢ Classroom Music Instruction ➢ Core French ➢ Physical Education ➢ French Instruction ➢ Art ➢ All City Music ➢ English as A Second Language ➢ Youth Foundation	Music 4.4 FTE's Physical Ed 4.9 FTE's French 5.5 FTE's 14.9 Art FTE's All City /Family Fine Arts Specialists 11.4 FTE's 7.0 ESL FTE's 4.0 FLEC's Teachers	Additional staffing creates better programming possibilities for children by allowing for more school based specialist staff to provide: ➢ Additional minutes music instruction ➢ Choir ➢ Additional minutes of physical education ➢ Outdoor education programming ➢ Early introduction to Core French for Gr. 3 ➢ Additional minutes of French instruction Gr. 4-6 ➢ Art instruction – Gr. 4-6 ➢ Fine arts specialist time ➢ Instrumental music ➢ ESL instruction ➢ Alternative high school education program – Youth Foundation.
Enhance the regional level of classroom support for Special Needs Students in the areas of: ➢ Specialist Teachers ➢ 4+ Program ➢ Social Workers ➢ Student Support Workers ➢ Educational Program Assistants	25.3 FTE Specialists 4.0 FTE 4+Teachers 4.0 Social Workers 2.0 Student Support Workers 30.0 EPA's	Additional staffing creates better programming possibilities for children by allowing for more regional and school based specialist staff to work with students in smaller groups or on a one-to-one level to provide: ➢ Special Classes designed for high needs students ➢ Specialist teachers in the areas of autism and behavior management ➢ 4+ classes with a teacher and EPA to better prepare students academically, socially and emotionally for entry into the public school system ➢ Social workers to meet emotional, social and family needs --a service essential in meeting the needs of the whole child

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
		➢ Student support workers who provide additional support for students ➢ Educational Program Assistants who provide support for high needs students.
Provide schools with additional staffing support in the areas of library, guidance and resource.	26.8 Library Techs 1.3 Guidance	Additional staffing in the area of library support, guidance and resource create much needed supports for students outside of the regular classroom setting: ➢ All schools have the benefit of library support staff, allowing students direct access to school libraries to support student achievement ➢ Additional allocation of resource teachers to serve a growing need. Resource provides an increased ability to provide early intervention with small groups within the school-serving the literacy and behavioral needs of the children ➢ Enhance guidance services in Halifax junior high schools to better meet the needs of junior high students - study skills, health, social and emotional issues.
Augment staff allocations to provide site-based administrative relief time.	15.2 VP .3 Principal	Additional site-based administrative time contributes to a safe school environment and provides administrators with the opportunity to focus more time on curriculum development resulting in a better learning environment for students. Vice-principal relief time provides: ➢ Enables a clear focus on a safe and inviting school which sets the context for learning ➢ Time to work collaboratively with the Principal to plan and support curriculum ➢ Time to better manage the supportive environment necessary for student achievement.
Provide additional school secretary staff for schools.	5.9 Secretaries	Additional secretary support means that there is someone in the office at all times to respond to both student and parent concerns and safety issues. The presence of a secretary means that the principal is able to devote time to more substantive issues.

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Provide resources to supplementary fund programs ➢ Special Education Programs ➢ Fine Arts ➢ Youth Foundation ➢ Outdoor Education ➢ Therapeutic Swim Program	$130,000	Staffing for programming is most effective when the resources needed to support the program are also available. SF funds are used to provide: ➢ Resources to support the Fine Arts Program such as student workshops and productions ➢ Supplies and materials for students in Fine Art program, such as pottery labs ➢ Flexible Learning Center with additional resources to support their programming needs ➢ Supplies and materials and other curriculum resources for students in special education programs, i.e. Therapeutic Swim Program ➢ Provides financial support for students to participate in outdoor experiences such as rock scrambling, canoeing, sailing and skiing.
Enhance the per pupil allocation for instructional materials and supplies and support school-based initiatives (i.e. School Improvement Plan).	$604,000	Schools are provided supplementary funds to augment the GF allocation to supplies and materials schools need to run PSP programming. They also receive a School Fund to be used to support the School Improvement Plan as well as other school base initiatives. It provides: ➢ Additional supplies and materials ➢ Funds to purchase additional resources such as textbooks, software, curriculum resources for science and math, social studies, etc. ➢ Initiatives directed at creating a safe, inviting school environment ➢ Funds for Bully Smart Training, Peer Mediation and Peer Helping programs ➢ Up-to-date computer hardware and software ➢ Improved school grounds and encourage our students to be more ecologically aware ➢ Enhanced library resources ➢ Support for school improvement plans.

DARTMOUTH

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Employ additional staffing to reduce the pupil teacher ratio.	12.8 FTE's	Additional teaching staff means smaller class sizes that have tremendous impact on each individual child and teacher. Children have better opportunities for success because of: ➢ Enhanced Learning environments for all children ➢ Support for children who had been experiencing challenges in larger classes ➢ Increased ability to deal with students with behavioral problems.

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Augment the regional level of classroom support in the areas of: ➢ Specialized Music Instruction ➢ Core French ➢ Physical Education ➢ French Education ➢ Art ➢ All City Music ➢ English as A Second Language	Music 5.6 FTE's French 2.8 FTE's Physical Ed 2.5 FTE's Art 4.60 FTE's All City/Family Fine Arts Specialists 5.1 FTE's 2.5 ESL FTE's 3.0 Jr. High Support	Additional staffing creates better programming possibilities for children by allowing for more school based specialist staff to provide: ➢ Additional minutes music instruction ➢ Additional minutes of physical education ➢ Additional minutes of French instruction Gr. 4-6 ➢ Art instruction at elementary and jr. high ➢ Instrumental music ➢ ESL instruction ➢ Junior high program support for at risk students.
Enhance the regional level of classroom support for Special Needs Students in the areas of: ➢ Specialist Teachers ➢ 4+ Program ➢ Social Workers ➢ Student Support Worker ➢ Educational Program Assistants	8.8 Specialist FTE's 2.0 Social Workers 12.1 EPA's 2.0 4+ Teachers 1.0 Student Support Worker	Additional staffing creates better programming possibilities for children by allowing for more regional and school based specialist staff to work with students in smaller groups or on a one-to-one level to provide: ➢ 4+ classes with a teacher and EPA to better prepare students academically, socially and emotionally for entry into the public school system ➢ Social workers to meet emotional, social and family needs --a service essential in meeting the needs of the whole child ➢ Student support worker who provides additional support for a Family of Schools ➢ Educational Program Assistants who provide support for high needs students.
Provide schools with additional staffing support in the areas of library assistants/technicians, guidance and resource.	15.5 Library Technicians 2.9 Guidance	Additional staffing in the area of library support, guidance and resource create much needed supports for the students outside of the regular classroom setting. (See Halifax for details).
Augment staff allocations to provide site-based administrative relief time.	1.4 VP	Additional site-based administrative time contributes to a safe school environment and provides administrators with the opportunity to focus more time on curriculum development in their school resulting in a better learning environment for students. (See Halifax for details).

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Provide additional school secretary staff for schools.	3.1 FTE Secretaries	Additional secretary support means that there is someone in the office at all times to respond to both student and parent concerns and safety issues. The presence of a secretary means that the principal is able to devote time to more substantive issues.
Provide resources to Families of Schools to encourage and promote excellence	$38,000	Staffing for programming is most effective when the resources needed to support the program are also available. SF funds are used to provide: ➢ Supplies and materials for students in Fine Art programs ➢ Supplies, materials and curriculum resources for students in special education programs.
Enhance the per pupil allocation for instructional materials and supplies and support school-based initiatives (i.e. School Improvement Plan).	$350,000	Schools are provided supplementary funds to augment the GF allocation to supplies and materials schools need to run PSP programming. They also receive a School Fund to be used to support the School Improvement Plan as well as other school based initiatives. (See Halifax for details).

COUNTY/BEDFORD

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Augment the regional level of classroom support for English as A Second Language.	2.0 ESL FTE's	Regional ESL support provided for students when needed.
Enhance the regional level of classroom support for special needs students in the area of: ➢ 4+ Program ➢ Educational Program Assistants	15.3 Resource Specialists 1.0 FTE 4+ Teacher 1.0 EPA	Additional staffing creates better programming possibilities for children by allowing for more regional and school based specialist staff to work with students in smaller groups or on a one-to-one level to provide: ➢ 4+ class with a teacher and EPA to better prepare students academically, socially and emotionally for entry into the public school system ➢ Educational Program Assistants who provide support for high needs students.
Employ additional staffing to enhance learning opportunities.	Within allocations to families	Additional teaching staff means smaller class sizes that have tremendous impact on each individual child and teacher. Other support staff address Family of Schools needs.
Provide schools with additional staffing support in the areas of: ➢ Library ➢ Resource	Within allocations to families	Additional staffing in the area of library support, guidance and resource create much needed supports for the students outside of the regular classroom setting. (See Halifax for details).

KEY INITIATIVE	*STATUS*	*IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT*
Provide additional school secretary staff for schools.	Within allocations to families	Additional secretary support means that there is someone in the office at all times to respond to both student and parent concerns and safety issues. The presence of a secretary means that the principal is able to devote time to more substantive issues.
Provide funds to the Families of Schools to support projects within the Families of Schools.	Within allocations to families	Several schools dedicated SF funds to Professional Development PD days and curriculum leadership positions.
Enhance the per pupil allocation for instructional materials and supplies and support school-based initiatives (i.e. School Improvement Plan).	Within allocations to families	Several schools dedicated SF funds to augment the purchase of supplies and materials provided by the general fund.

ISSUES ANALYSIS

ISSUE #1 EQUITY

The current amount of supplementary funding and the distribution of that funding throughout the Halifax Regional Municipality is not equitable. As a result, certain students, based on where they live in HRM, have access to a greater amount of resources than others, to enhance and augment their learning experience.

Section 530 of the Municipal Government act outlines the provisions for supplementary funding in the former cities of Halifax and Dartmouth. Funds raised in these areas can only be spent in these specific areas within the municipality. The additional education funding in the former Halifax County-Bedford is an area rate and was first introduced in 2000-2001.

The current inequity exists for both students and taxpayers. The supplementary fund tax rate is different in each of the three former municipalities so it would be difficult to achieve resource allocation equity until all taxpayers are paying the same rate.

Since the funds must be spent in the areas raised, it results in different amounts available per student. For example, the amount raised in Halifax is almost 10 times higher per student than in the County-Bedford. This gives schools in the former Halifax access to more resources to improve student success than the former County-Bedford. The HRSB believes students in certain parts of the municipality should not be disadvantaged from a resources perspective.

With amalgamation in 1996, the school board became one organization responsible for public education in the entire area of Halifax Regional Municipality. The School Board is committed to allocating all available resources equitably throughout the region to support all students, regardless of where they live or where the funds were raised. The barriers to equity that exist due to the pre-1996 provisions must be removed.

Goal 2004-2007

Attain a sustainable and committed level of supplementary funding, based on a standard municipal tax rate, that is available to be spent equitably across the entire region.

Objectives 2004-2005

1. Begin a phased increase in the County-Bedford tax rate with a view to having a standard rate across the region within 3 years. As well, the commercial assessment in the County-Bedford should be taxed on the same basis as Halifax and Dartmouth (2.55 times residential rate).

2. Partner with HRM Council to advocate for equitable general funding for HRSB.

3. Obtain a commitment from HRM to provide annual funding increases to offset cost drivers.

Analysis of Proposed Changes

The HRSB has long advocated that the funding allocation model used by the Province to distribute mandatory education funding is not equitable. This assertion has been recently supported by the Auditor General in his 2003 Annual Report.

The Board is confident that the impetus is now in place for the Province to examine the funding formula. With a combined effort, HRM and HRSB can advocate for equitable mandatory funding.

The Board also sees a link between achieving equity in mandatory funding and supplementary funding. The Board would propose that:

a) The supplementary fund tax rates be equalized at approximately the current Halifax rate over a 3-year phase in period.

b) Once equalized, the entire supplementary funding would be managed as one fund for the entire region and spent equitably to provide resources that directly improve learning success for all students. This objective would require amendments to the Municipal Government Act.

c) Increases in general funding as a result of equity changes in the funding model would be used to maintain many of the current core program enhancements in Halifax and Dartmouth. In this way, commitments would be made to preserve these supplementary funded programs and services, but funded from general revenues.

d) HRM provide a commitment that annual supplementary funding would be adjusted to reflect known cost drivers such as negotiated salary increases. This would provide much needed stability to schools and communities knowing that successful programs and services are secure over the long term.

The Board is confident that with HRM approval of these initiatives, and partnering with the Board to seek Provincial funding improvements, a new era of stability and equity can be achieved to the benefit of all students in our region.

ISSUE #2 PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

The Public School Program, or core program as it is sometimes called, is defined by the Province. However, mandatory funding to the HRSB has been insufficient to provide the level and breadth of programs and services expected by the citizens of HRM. Supplementary funding has been provided to not only enhance the core program, but provide other valuable programs and services that are not within the core program. These enhancements funded by supplementary funding have been a major contributor to student success and achieving "Smart City" status for HRM.

The public clearly supports supplementary funding and the enhanced educational opportunities it provides to our students. However, achieving the objectives in Issue #1 also presents an opportunity for dialogue on how supplementary funds can best be spent to maximize learning opportunities.

To this point, the expenditure of these funds has been guided by the HRSB policy on Supplementary Funding. The main premise is that the funds be used to enhance or augment programs and services for students. No funding is allocated for building or operational costs.

Budgeting the funds has also developed in different ways with the majority of funds in Halifax and Dartmouth being managed more centrally whereas the majority of funds in the County-Bedford are managed in a more decentralized manner. The families of schools have been allocated funds based on student population and they decide how to spend the money in accordance with their needs and priorities.

Goal 2004-2007

Adopt a consistent approach to budgeting and managing supplementary funds throughout the region and having the funds used in ways the Board deems appropriate to maximize student opportunities and success.

Objectives 2004-2005

1. Review the HRSB Supplementary fund policy in conjunction with progress in achieving objectives in Issue #1, with a view to updating the types of resources that can be acquired by supplementary funding to maximize student opportunities and success.

2. Review the budget management approach to supplementary funding in conjunction with progress on objectives in Issue #1 to achieve a more consistent approach across the region.

Analysis of Proposed Changes

As part of overall approval of this business plan and budget by HRM, the HRSB would commit to undertaking a review of the spending criteria for supplementary funding. Implementation of any changes would, in large part, hinge on success in achieving more equitable mandatory funding.

The HRSB would commit to obtaining input from HRM Council on spending criteria for supplementary funding. Such consultation would help reach a shared vision on the amount of funding and how it should be spent to maximize student success.

The Board would also examine the budget and management model. There are significant benefits to taking a more centralized approach to maximize the benefits for all students. However, some portion of the funding should be allocated to the school or family of schools level to address unique needs and priorities in school communities.

A thorough review of the budget and management process can ensure funds are being allocated and managed in the most effective manner.

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

HALIFAX	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
REVENUES					
Halifax Regional Municipality	12,664,700	12,295,800	12,295,200	368,900	369,500
EXPENDITURES					
School Services					
Classroom Teachers					
Specialized Music	247,900	208,700	229,600	39,200	18,300
Core French	128,600	131,800	141,700	-3,200	-13,100
French Instruction	157,200	157,900	132,700	-700	24,500
Physical Education	288,300	240,700	255,700	47,600	32,600
Art Instruction	800,400	764,200	761,700	36,200	38,700
Classroom Teachers	2,881,600	2,652,900	2,574,300	228,700	307,300
Fine Arts	645,300	629,300	674,000	16,000	-28,700
Youth ESL	390,900	372,600	372,400	18,300	18,500
Junior High Support/FLEC	175,700	175,700	182,000	0	-6,300
Sub-total	5,715,900	5,333,800	5,324,100	382,100	391,800
Special Education					
Resource Teachers	1,388,400	1,516,500	1,450,300	-128,100	-61,900
Social Workers	258,600	258,600	260,800	0	-2,200
EPA's	837,300	835,000	826,700	2,300	10,600
Sub-total	2,484,300	2,610,100	2,537,800	-125,800	-53,500

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

HALIFAX

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
Library & Guidance					
Library Technicians	751,800	755,600	765,500	-3,800	-13,700
Guidance	74,500	72,900	70,900	1,600	3,600
Sub-total	826,300	828,500	836,400	-2,200	-10,100
School Administrators	1,103,400	1,048,500	1,097,300	54,900	6,100
Other					
Student Services Secretaries	14,400	14,200	14,700	200	-300
4 Plus Teachers	217,500	207,200	216,000	10,300	1,500
Secretaries	151,000	160,100	153,600	-9,100	-2,600
Student Support Workers	61,400	63,400	61,700	-2,000	-300
Sub-total	444,300	444,900	446,000	-600	-1,700
Benefits					
Statutory	699,800	681,800	613,300	18,000	86,500
Medical/Dental/SalCon	150,800	151,800	142,600	-1,000	8,200
Service Awards	87,600	86,800	86,800	800	800
Pension	155,500	122,500	124,100	33,000	31,400
Sub-total	1,093,700	1,042,900	966,800	50,800	126,900
Substitutes	262,800	253,100	253,100	9,700	9,700

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

HALIFAX

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
Program Support					
Program Supplies & Materials	55,000	55,000	62,400	0	-7,400
Schools Funds	302,000	302,000	302,000	0	0
Schools - Supplies & Materials	302,000	302,000	455,600	0	-153,600
French Immersion Supplies	0	0	77,300	0	-77,300
Therapeutic Swim Program	20,000	20,000	20,000	0	0
Junior High Support	55,000	55,000	55,000	0	0
Sub-total	734,000	734,000	972,300	0	-238,300
Carry Forward (Surplus) Deficit	0	0	(138,600)	0	138,600
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	12,664,700	12,295,800	12,295,200	368,900	369,500
Surplus	0	0	0		

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

HALIFAX

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
School Services					
Classroom Teachers					
Specialized Music	4.40	84,125	4.40	163,762	247,887
Core French	2.50	43,651	2.50	84,973	128,624
French Instruction	3.00	53,351	3.00	103,856	157,207
Physical Education	4.90	97,846	4.90	190,472	288,318
Art Instruction	14.90	271,641	14.90	528,789	800,430
Additional Teachers	45.70	881,133	53.30	2,000,505	2,881,638
Fine Arts	11.40	219,000	11.40	426,316	645,316
Youth ESL	7.00	132,648	7.00	258,219	390,867
FLEC	4.00	63,637	4.00	123,879	175,667
Sub-total	97.80	1,847,032	105.40	3,880,771	5,715,954
Special Education					
Central Allocations:					
Resource Teachers	9.60	185,693	9.60	361,479	583,622
Behaviour & Congregated Classes	12.70	214,269	12.70	417,106	631,375
Family Allocations:					
Behaviour & CDST	3.00	62,316	3.00	121,307	173,391
Social Workers	4.00	92,721	4.00	180,495	258,625
EPA's	30.00	289,838	30.00	547,472	837,310
Sub-total	59.30	844,837	59.30	1,627,859	2,484,323

APPENDIX A

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

HALIFAX

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July) FTE's	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July) Salary Cost	School Year 2004-2005 (August -March) FTE's	School Year 2004-2005 (August -March) Salary Cost	TOTAL Salary Cost
Library & Guidance					
Library Technicians	26.80	260,224	26.80	491,534	751,758
Guidance	1.30	25,298	1.30	49,246	74,544
Sub-total	28.10	285,522	28.10	540,780	826,302
School Administrators	15.50	376,928	15.50	726,481	1,103,409
Other					
Student Services Secretaries	0.50	4,563	0.50	9,778	14,341
4 Plus Teachers	4.00	73,818	4.00	143,698	217,516
Secretaries	5.40	48,051	5.40	102,966	151,017
Student Support Workers	2.00	21,265	2.00	40,167	61,432
Sub-total	11.90	147,697	11.90	296,609	444,306
Benefits					
Statutory		257,258		442,571	699,829
Medical/Dental/SalCon		51,787		98,989	150,776
Service Awards		28,781		58,803	87,584
Pension		53,409		102,078	155,487
Sub-total		391,235		702,441	1,093,676
Substitutes					
Short Term Sick Leave		86,342		176,411	262,753
Total Salary & Benefits	212.60	3,979,593	220.20	7,951,352	11,930,723

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

DARTMOUTH

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
REVENUES					
Halifax Regional Municipality	5,396,400	5,239,200	5,239,200	157,200	157,200
EXPENDITURES					
School Services					
Classroom Teachers					
Specialized Music	286,700	272,700	279,600	14,000	7,100
French Instruction	148,400	147,300	146,300	1,100	2,100
Physical Education	146,600	128,500	138,300	18,100	8,300
Art Instruction	270,000	261,500	267,900	8,500	2,100
Additional Teachers	822,400	877,800	837,100	-55,400	-14,700
Fine Arts	287,900	291,000	293,400	-3,100	-5,500
Youth ESL	133,400	126,300	132,200	7,100	1,200
Junior High Support	151,600	143,600	153,200	8,000	-1,600
Sub-total	2,247,000	2,248,700	2,248,000	-1,700	-1,000
Special Education					
Teachers	612,500	551,200	556,200	61,300	56,300
Social Workers	124,400	126,800	118,600	-2,400	5,800
EPA's	336,700	362,700	342,000	-26,000	-5,300
Sub-total	1,073,600	1,040,700	1,016,800	32,900	56,800

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

DARTMOUTH

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
Library & Guidance					
Library Technicians	432,700	429,900	413,300	2,800	19,400
Guidance	187,800	126,100	133,700	61,700	54,100
Sub-total	620,500	556,000	547,000	64,500	73,500
School Administrators	148,400	137,800	159,900	10,600	-11,500
Other					
Student Services Secretary	5,200	5,500	5,800	-300	-600
4 Plus Teachers	106,900	112,800	107,100	-5,900	-200
Secretaries	77,500	91,500	87,800	-14,000	-10,300
Student Support Workers	31,900	31,300	32,200	600	-300
Sub-total	221,500	241,100	232,900	-19,600	-11,400
Benefits					
Statutory	276,400	286,600	253,000	-10,200	23,400
Medical/Dental/SalCon	75,800	76,400	75,100	-600	700
Service Awards	31,900	30,700	30,700	1,200	1,200
Pension	75,700	61,700	60,700	14,000	15,000
Sub-total	459,800	455,400	419,500	4,400	40,300
Substitutes	95,800	99,100	99,600	-3,300	-3,800

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

DARTMOUTH

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
Program Support					
Program Supplies & Materials	35,000	35,000	39,400	0	-4,400
Schools Funds	150,000	150,000	150,000	0	0
Schools - Supplies & Materials	265,800	200,000	264,900	65,800	900
Junior High Support	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	0
Additional Busses	76,000	72,400	72,400	3,600	3,600
Sub-total	529,800	460,400	529,700	69,400	100
Carry Forward (Surplus)	0	0	(14,200)	0	14,200
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,396,400	5,239,200	5,239,200	157,200	157,200
Surplus	0	0	0		

APPENDIX B

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

DARTMOUTH

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
School Services					
Classroom Teachers					
Specialized Music	5.60	97,300	5.60	189,409	286,709
French Instruction	2.80	50,369	2.80	98,051	148,420
Physical Education	2.50	49,742	2.50	96,830	146,572
Art Instruction	4.60	91,624	4.60	178,360	269,984
Additional Teachers	12.80	231,348	16.80	591,088	822,436
Fine Arts	5.10	97,712	5.10	190,211	287,923
Youth ESL	2.50	45,255	2.50	88,096	133,351
Junior High Support	3.00	51,456	3.00	100,167	151,623
Sub-total	38.90	714,806	42.90	1,532,212	2,247,018
Special Education					
Resource Teachers	5.80	128,227	5.80	249,613	377,840
Behaviour & Congregated Classes	3.00	65,865	3.00	128,216	234,700
Social Workers	2.00	42,196	2.00	82,141	124,337
EPA's	12.10	116,562	12.10	220,173	336,735
Sub-total	22.90	352,850	22.90	680,143	1,073,612
Library & Guidance					
Library Technicians	15.50	149,795	15.50	282,946	432,741
Guidance	2.90	63,713	2.90	124,027	187,740
Sub-total	18.40	213,508	18.40	406,973	620,481
Administrators	1.40	50,673	1.40	97,666	148,339

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

DARTMOUTH

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
Other					
Student Services Secretaries	0.20	1,797	0.20	3,394	5,191
4 Plus Teachers	2.00	36,272	2.00	70,609	106,881
Secretaries	2.90	26,843	2.90	50,703	77,546
Student Support Workers	1.00	10,965	1.00	20,919	31,884
Sub-total	6.10	75,877	6.10	145,625	221,502
Benefits					
Statutory		104,273		172,130	276,403
Medical/Dental/SalCon		25,395		50,385	75,780
Service Awards		10,359		21,563	31,922
Pension		26,190		49,489	75,679
Sub-total		166,217		293,567	459,784
Substitutes					
Short Term Sick Leave		31,077		64,688	95,765
Total Salary & Benefits	87.70	1,605,008	91.70	3,220,874	4,866,501

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
REVENUES					
Halifax Regional Municipality	5,312,000	3,312,000	3,312,000	-2,000,000	2,000,000
	5,312,000	3,312,000	3,312,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
EXPENDITURES					
School Services					
Families of Schools Staffing - School Year 2002-2003	4,086,300	2,157,200	2,196,300	1,929,100	1,890,000
Special Education					
Teachers	909,300	857,400	834,400	51,900	74,900
Sub-total	909,300	857,400	834,400	51,900	74,900
Other					
ESL Teacher	123,100	115,000	101,400	8,100	21,700
4+ Teachers	44,500	41,200	43,700	3,300	800
EPA's	28,300	27,900	32,000	400	-3,700
Sub-total	195,900	184,100	177,100	11,800	18,800

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
BUDGET SUMMARY
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

	Budget 2004-2005	Budget 2003-2004	Projection 2003-2004	Change Budget To Budget	Change Budget To Projection
Benefits					
Statutory	72,700	68,600	53,900	4,100	18,800
Medical/Dental/SalCon	2,300	2,300	3,500	0	-1,200
Service Awards	10,800	10,100	10,100	700	700
Pension	2,400	1,900	2,800	500	-400
Sub-total	88,200	82,900	70,300	5,300	17,900
Substitutes	32,300	30,400	30,400	1,900	1,900
Carry Forward Deficit	0	0	3,500	0	-3,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	5,312,000	3,312,000	3,312,000	2,000,000	2,000,000
Surplus	0	0	0		

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
School Services - Centrally Allocated					
Special Education					
Teachers	15.30	308,597	15.30	600,729	909,326
Sub-total	15.30	308,597	15.30	600,729	909,326
Other					
ESL Teacher	2.00	41,759	2.00	81,290	123,049
4 Plus Teachers	1.00	15,104	1.00	29,402	44,506
EPA's	1.00	9,786	1.00	18,485	28,271
Sub-total	4.00	66,649	4.00	129,177	195,826
Substitutes					
Short Term Sick Leave		10,964		21,343	32,306
Benefits					
Statutory		26,828		45,883	72,711
Medical/Dental/SalCon		812		1,534	2,346
Service Awards		3,655		7,114	10,769
Pension		838		1,582	2,420
Sub-total		32,133		56,114	88,247
Total Salary & Benefits (Central)	19.30	418,342	19.30	807,363	1,225,705

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND STAFFING BUDGET

2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

Funds Managed by Family:	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
Auburn Drive Family (____)					
2003-2004 (4,500)					
Salaries	5.80	83,602			
Benefits		11,254			
Sub-total		94,856			
Cole Harbour Family (____)					
2003-2004 (4,814)					
Salaries	5.70	72,300			
Benefits		12,542			
Sub-total		84,842			
Duncan MacMillan Family (____)					
2003-2004 (530)					
Salaries	0.50	8,452			
Benefits		659			
Sub-total		9,111			
Eastern Shore Dist. High Family (____)					
2003-2004 (2,392)					
Salaries	3.20	47,429			
Benefits		5,465			
Sub-total		52,894			

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
Musquodoboit Rural High Family (___)					
2003-2004 (826)					
Salaries	1.30	14,259			
Benefits		2,777			
Sub-total		17,036			
CP Allen Family (____)					
2003-2004 (4,221)					
Salaries	6.20	72,422			
Benefits		14,369			
Sub-total		86,791			
JL Ilsley Family (____)					
2003-2004 (1,004)					
Salaries	1.70	18,665			
Benefits		3,627			
Sub-total		22,292			
Lockview High Family (____)					
2003-2004 (3,661)					
Salaries	5.70	63,909			
Benefits		12,961			
Sub-total		76,870			

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

	School Year 2003-2004 (April-July)		School Year 2004-2005 (August -March)		TOTAL
	FTE's	Salary Cost	FTE's	Salary Cost	Salary Cost
Sir John A Macdonald Family (____)					
2003-2004 (4,733)					
Salaries	5.40	83,756			
Benefits		9,445			
Sub-total		93,201			
Millwood High Family (____)					
2003-2004 (2,604)					
Salaries	3.80	59,382			
Benefits		7,830			
Sub-total		67,212			
Sackville High Family (____)					
2003-2004 (4,086)					
Salaries	5.30	69,458			
Benefits		12,116			
Sub-total		81,574			
Total Funds Managed by Family: (____)	44.60	686,679		3,399,616	4,086,295
2003-2004 (33,371)					
Grand Total Salaries & Benefits	63.90	1,105,021		4,206,979	5,312,000

Note 1: Beside each school family name will be the projected April 30, 2004 enrolment for allocating the 2004-2005 funds. Beside 2003-2004 (in brackets) is the April 30, 2003 enrolment projection that was used to allocate the 2003-2004 funds.

Note 2: The amounts in the 2004-2005 School Year column will be allocated to staffing after budget approval.

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

COUNTY-BEDFORD

Funds Managed by Family - Summary:

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	 Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	13.50	235,577
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		235,577
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		9,680
Special Education		
Teachers	1.10	25,609
Social Workers		
EPA's	2.80	26,392
Sub-total		52,001
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	21.00	202,037
Teacher Librarian	1.00	21,196
Sub-total		223,233
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	3.60	32,848
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		32,848
School Administrators	1.60	40,295
Benefits		
Statutory		45,767
Medical/Dental/SalCon		21,686
Service Awards		3,227
Pension		22,365
Sub-total		93,045
Total Salary & Benefits	44.60	686,680

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Auburn Drive Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	 Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	3.10	55,770
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		55,770
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		1,673
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	2.50	24,302
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		24,302
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	0.20	1,857
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		1,857
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		6,286
Medical/Dental/SalCon		2,171
Service Awards		558
Pension		2,239
Sub-total		11,254
Total Salary & Benefits	5.80	94,856

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Cole Harbour High Family

	School year 2003-2004	(April - July)
	FTE's	Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	1.30	25,743
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		25,743
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		992
Special Education		
Teachers	0.30	7,340
Social Workers		
EPA's	1.10	10,150
Sub-total		17,490
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	3.00	28,075
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		28,075
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries		
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		5,766
Medical/Dental/SalCon		3,173
Service Awards		331
Pension		3,272
Sub-total		12,542
Total Salary & Benefits	5.70	84,842

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Duncan MacMillan Family

	School year 2003-2004	(April - July)
	FTE's	Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	0.50	8,206
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		8,206
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		246
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians		
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries		
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		577
Medical/Dental/SalCon		0
Service Awards		82
Pension		0
Sub-total		659
Total Salary & Benefits	0.50	9,111

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Eastern Shore District High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	2.20	36,546
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		36,546
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		1,096
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	1.00	9,786
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		9,786
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries		
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		3,450
Medical/Dental/SalCon		812
Service Awards		365
Pension		838
Sub-total		5,465
Total Salary & Benefits	3.20	52,894

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Musquodoboit Rural High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	0.30	4,924
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		4,924
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		148
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians		
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	1.00	9,187
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		9,187
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		1,179
Medical/Dental/SalCon		763
Service Awards		49
Pension		786
Sub-total		2,777
Total Salary & Benefits	1.30	17,036

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

CP Allen High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	0.60	10,291
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		10,291
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		702
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	5.00	48,332
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		48,332
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries		
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		
School Administrators	0.60	13,098
Benefits		
Statutory		5,986
Medical/Dental/SalCon		4,012
Service Awards		234
Pension		4,137
Sub-total		14,369
Total Salary & Benefits	6.20	86,791

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

JL Ilsley High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	0.20	3,283
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		3,283
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		194
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	0.40	3,738
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		3,738
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	0.90	8,269
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		8,269
School Administrators	0.20	3,181
Benefits		
Statutory		1,538
Medical/Dental/SalCon		997
Service Awards		65
Pension		1,028
Sub-total		3,627
Total Salary & Benefits	1.70	22,292

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Lockview High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	1.00	19,121
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		19,121
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		574
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's		
Sub-total		
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	4.00	38,006
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		38,006
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	0.70	6,209
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		6,209
School Administrators		
Benefits		
Statutory		5,315
Medical/Dental/SalCon		3,670
Service Awards		191
Pension		3,785
Sub-total		12,961
Total Salary & Benefits	5.70	76,870

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Sir John A Macdonald Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	2.60	41,387
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		41,387
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		1,973
Special Education		
Teachers	0.70	15,822
Social Workers		
EPA's	0.20	1,816
Sub-total		17,638
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	0.80	7,829
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		7,829
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	0.70	6,379
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		6,379
School Administrators	0.40	8,550
Benefits		
Statutory		6,086
Medical/Dental/SalCon		1,330
Service Awards		658
Pension		1,372
Sub-total		9,446
Total Salary & Benefits	5.40	93,201

APPENDIX C

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Millwood High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	0.50	8,206
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		8,206
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		1,217
Special Education		
Teachers	0.10	2,447
Social Workers		
EPA's	0.70	6,850
Sub-total		9,297
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	1.00	9,786
Teacher Librarian	1.00	21,196
Sub-total		30,982
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries	0.10	947
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		947
School Administrators	0.40	8,732
Benefits		
Statutory		4,460
Medical/Dental/SalCon		1,459
Service Awards		406
Pension		1,505
Sub-total		7,830
Total Salary & Benefits	3.80	67,212

SUPPLEMENTARY FUND
STAFFING BUDGET
2004-2005

Sackville High Family

	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) FTE's	School year 2003-2004 (April - July) Salary Cost
School Services		
Classroom Teachers		
Additional Teachers	1.20	22,100
Youth ESL		
Sub-total		22,100
Substitutes		
Short Term Sick Leave		865
Special Education		
Teachers		
Social Workers		
EPA's	0.80	7,576
Sub-total		7,576
Library & Guidance		
Library Technicians	3.30	32,183
Teacher Librarian		
Sub-total		32,183
Other		
4 Plus Teachers		
Secretaries		
Student Support Workers		
Sub-total		0
School Administrators		6,734
Benefits		
Statutory		5,124
Medical/Dental/SalCon		3,300
Service Awards		288
Pension		3,403
Sub-total		12,116
Total Salary & Benefits	5.30	81,574

APPENDIX D

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
SUPPLEMENTARY FUND BUSINESS PLAN & BUDGET
2004-2005

KEY FACTS

	Halifax	Dartmouth	County/Bedford
Schools	34	24	81
Enrolment-			
September 30, 2002	12,945	9,745	34,275
September 30, 2003	13,239	9,413	33,841
2002-2003			
Residential Tax Rate	11.75¢	9.5¢	4.4¢
Weighted Assessment	$10,463,475,550	$5,505,238,250	$7,532,196,500
Funding	$12,295,800	$5,239,200	$3,312,000
2003-2004			
Residential Tax Rate	10.9¢	8.8¢	4.0¢
Weighted Assessment	$11,302,395,000	$5,942,567,800	$8,206,349,300
Funding	$12,295,800	$5,239,200	$3,312,000
Funding per Student – 2003-2004	$929	$557	$99
Total Supplementary Funded FTE's (School Year 2003-2004)			
Teachers -	147.9	56.0	34.1
Non-teachers -	64.7	31.7	28.8

Note 1: Weighted assessment is residential assessment plus 2.55 times the commercial assessment. This reflects the fact that the commercial tax rate is 2.55 times the residential rate. However, this does not currently apply to the County/Bedford area as it is still applied as an area rate and not a property tax.

Public ☐
Private ☐

Report No: 03-09-655
Date: September 9, 2003

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
Follow Up Status Report – Auditor General Report – 2001

PURPOSE:	To provide the Board with a follow up status report on the Auditor General Report of 2001.
BACKGROUND:	In the fall of 2000, the Auditor General conducted a review of school board budgeting and financial management practices. The audit was focused mainly on the CCRSB and the HRSB. The results were reported in the 2000 Annual Report of the Auditor General released in January 2001.
CONTENT:	There were numerous observations and recommendations that directed towards the HRSB. Since that time, significant improvement has taken place in budgeting and financial management practices within the HRSB. The attached report highlights the findings and recommendations of the Auditor General and the action taken by the Board to address these matters.
COST:	N/A
FUNDING:	N/A
TIMELINE:	N/A
APPENDICES:	Appendix A – Follow Up Status Report
RECOMMENDATIONS:	It is recommended that the Board receive this report for information.
COMMUNICATIONS:	
From:	For further information contact: Richard Morris, Executive Director of Financial Services, at 464-2000 Ext. 2268 or e-mail **rmorris@hrsb.ns.ca.**
To:	Audit & Finance - September 16, 2003

File: *dhanf/Auditor Gen Rep-2001-Follow Up Status*
Date: *September 9, 2003*

APPENDIX A

HALIFAX REGIONAL SCHOOL BOARD
AUDITOR GENERAL REPORT - 2001
FOLLOW UP STATUS REPORT
SEPTEMBER 16, 2003

OBSERVATION/ RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN/ STATUS
Business Planning	
HRSB has elements of a business plan but has not developed a formal plan.	**The Board has completed annual business plans since 2001. The process is now firmly entrenched in both Board policy and Department of Education guidelines. The Board has received favourable response from the Department to the 2003-2004 business plan. Formal business planning is undertaken for the Supplementary Fund as well.**
Budget Process	
1. Linkage of budget to long term and operational plans should be clear and well documented	**The process of completing business plans and budgets has continued to evolve and improve since 2001. The 2003-2004 business plans and budgets have very clear and well documented linkages and this has now become an important and regular component of this process.**
2. No documentation on presentation and approval of budget assumptions. The Board should require preparation and approval of budget assumptions as one of the first steps in the budget process.	**The Financial Services Department prepares detailed budget assumptions and retains the supporting documentation. The budget assumptions are reviewed and endorsed by Senior Staff and other relevant staff. The budget assumptions are reviewed with the Board at the Budget Workshops as the first step of Board review and approval. This is considered an appropriate approach to development, review and endorsement of budget assumptions.**

OBSERVATION/ RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN/ STATUS
3. (a) HRSB improve the quality of the enrolment assumptions used during the budget process and that the staffing formula be specifically developed and approved by the Board.	There is a formal staffing model that is used by Senior Staff and the Board to allocate budgeted staffing. This model was reviewed and approved by the Board in April 2003 prior to final approval of the budget. Enrolment projections are done in the spring and have been very accurate in the past.
Board members be directly involved in determining the number of staff and average class sizes for the coming year.	Overall staffing formulas, enrolment projections and allocations were approved by the Board in April 2003. It is a formal policy that the Board approve the number of staff and staffing formulas as part of the budget process.
(b) Enrolment projections should be provided to the Board for review as part of the initial stages of budget preparation.	The enrolment projection process was revised in 2003 to improve accuracy. Enrolment projections are provided to the Board when complete. This was done in April 2003 for the 2003-2004 school year and will continue to be an integral part of budget preparation every year. Adjustments are made in September based on actual enrolments.
4. HRSB did not retain detailed support for the preliminary budget calculations. Support for the final budget should be retained.	Financial Services now retains all detailed supporting budget documentation.
5. There was inadequate supporting analysis in some cases: - heating fuel budget - maintenance supplies & materials with strategies and plans for achieving budget targets not documented.	This observation actually applied only to heating fuel. The maintenance budget is determined by available funding and School Facilities manages to that amount. The nature and extent of detailed supporting analysis for the budget has improved over the past two years and staff retains the detailed supporting analysis for all budget line items.

OBSERVATION/ RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN/ STATUS
6. HRSB has no documentation standards, retention schedules, requirements for formal sign off or independent quality control reviews for the final budget.	Although the Board has not yet prepared a broad based records retention policy, Financial Services retains all budget records for a 7 year period. We have not required departments to formally sign off the preparation of their first draft budgets but we do have a decentralized budget preparation process and all departments are asked to confirm their draft budgets before proceeding to Board approval. For independent quality control reviews, we have had Joe MacEachern of the Department of Education review the budget prior to final Board approval. Human Resources will be undertaking the development of a broad based records retention policy in 2003-2004.
7. (a) HRSB Board was given inadequate information on which to base a budget related decision re CC&P.	There was disagreement with this observation and belief that the Board was given all the information it required to make an informed decision. It was a one-off situation that did not require follow up.
(b) Recommend that for profit centres, information going to the Board be prepared in accordance with appropriate profit centre accounting practices.	The budget document has been modified to incorporate this recommendation, i.e., EXCEL, Facilities Rentals, etc.
8. Budgets should be completed and approved prior to commencement of the fiscal year.	A final budget cannot be approved without official funding notification from the Province. The Board follows an acceptable timeframe for budget approval based on the timing of funding information and meets all legislated budget approval time requirements. For 2004-2005, the plan is to complete the process in April 2004, or within 30 days of receipt of provincial funding.

OBSERVATION/ RECOMMENDATION	ACTION TAKEN/ STATUS
Information Systems	
1. HRSB does not include prior year actuals in their monthly statements for comparison with current results.	**With the SRB system, which was formerly used by the Board, it was very difficult to provide prior years actuals. We have only used SAP for one fiscal year. It is easier to report prior years actuals with SAP and this will be pursued with the intention of including this information by the third quarterly report for 2003-2004.**
2. HRSB does not have a formal policy for preparing written budget to actual comparisons and related variance explanations. There are no written criteria for what is considered a significant variance.	**The Business Plan and Budget Policy requires Board departments to investigate variances and commentary on variances is provided to the Board on a quarterly basis. We will prepare more formal criteria on variance explanations and reporting and amend the Procedures to reflect this enhanced process for the next quarterly report.**
3. All staff who have budgetary responsibilities should be involved in reviewing financial information and preparing variance explanations.	**These measures are included in the Budget and Business Plan Policy of the Board. All Board departments have responsibility in preparation and review of the budget and monitoring actual financial results.**
4. RSB's should start the forecasting process early in the fiscal year.	**The forecasting process is started after the second quarter, with a more concentrated effort beginning during the third quarter when the new school year has begun. More accurate forecasts can only be achieved after September 30 enrolments are confirmed and related staffing adjustments have been completed.**

Response to Standing Committee on Human Resources

Do we have any schools where the square foot per student does not meet Fire Marshall Regulations?

The issue of school construction, building codes and fire marshall regulations is complex. Codes change from time to time but fall into at least two separate categories; those which apply to new construction, from that date forward, and those such as sprinkler and other safety issues which may require retrofitting of existing buildings. An ongoing review of schools is conducted annually by the Fire Marshall's office and any noted deficiencies are addressed as required.

All schools within the Halifax Regional Municipality are built to the current specifications of the day. Current construction, which has been the case for some time now, follows the Design Requirements Manual (DRM) from the Nova Scotia Department of Transportation and Public Works (TPW). All building and fire safety codes are incorporated into the design and construction of all school buildings.

Keefe, Marg

From: Silver, Janice
Sent: Friday, May 07, 2004 9:32 AM
To: Olsen, Carole
Cc: White, Judy
Subject: RE: Hungry Children

Hi Carole,

Glad the hungry kids info is what you needed & I would definitely like to discuss the broader issues at some future date.

Thanks for your good wishes re the Youth Health Centre presentation that Linda Young & I will be making at the Primary Health Care conference in Winnipeg - should be interesting! We gave one to the CDHA Board & Executive last evening at the QE II & part of the presentation was given by a YHC coordinator & 2 students. The kids were absolutely wonderful & stole the show, for sure! The CDHA Board indicated that they would definitely be advocating for additional funding in order to provide more YHC staff time in both junior & senior highs! I think that it would be great to make a similar presentation to our Board, sometime soon!

Janice

> -----Original Message-----
> **From:** Olsen, Carole
> **Sent:** Thursday, May 06, 2004 3:10 PM
> **To:** Silver, Janice; White, Judy
> **Subject:** RE: Hungry Children
>
> Thanks Janice:
>
> This is precisely what I need. We can discuss this boarder issue and what we can do about it at another time. I hope you have a wonderful trip to Winnipeg.
>
> Thanks
>
> Carole
>
>> -----Original Message-----
>> **From:** Silver, Janice
>> **Sent:** Thursday, May 06, 2004 1:05 PM
>> **To:** White, Judy; Olsen, Carole
>> **Subject:** Hungry Children
>>
>> HI Judy & Carole,
>>
>> Here is my best guess on the number of kids coming to school hungry:
>>
>> I don't have the 2003/04 figures for the daily average of kids attending breakfast/nutrition support programs, although I will be asking for that info towards the end of the school year! So if you need the number right away, then last year's would be a reasonable approximation - **1,736 being fed at the 34 schools** where there were programs last year. Two schools fell by the wayside this year (had only small numbers attending), while two more have started up operation. Of course the difficulty in trying to get an accurate number, even with schools with breakfast programs is that we really don't know for sure if we're getting all of the hungry kids (probably we're not) & we don't

know how many might be there for other reasons - social, nowhere else to go, etc.
If you were to go on the assumption that the figure of 1,736 would be representative of the proportion of kids who would attend programs if there was one in every school, then the number would be approximately 8,772. However, I think that would probably be on the high side, as many of the schools in communities where there is the highest concentration of lower income families already have programs. According to the figures released earlier this year, the number of NS kids living in families who have incomes below the povery line is still almost one in five, which would translate into just over 11,000 of our students. **So it would be reasonable to assume that as many as 8,700 of our students may be hungry or at least somewhat undernourished** on any **given day.**

Based on the 1,736 figure, I expect that a more accurate estimate could be made using our demographic figures, but it would still be only a better guess, as we are lacking a definitive user profile!

Janice

-----Original Message-----
From: White, Judy
Sent: Wednesday, May 05, 2004 7:59 PM
To: Silver, Janice
Subject: Hungry Children

Hi Janice,

Can you give me an estimate of how many children come to school hungry each day?
Without breakfast.
Carole needs this for legislature.
How many do we serve breakfast?

Thanks

Judy

USE OF BOARD FACILITIES

POLICY

1.0 The Halifax Regional School Board will encourage and support the use of its facilities outside of normal instructional hours, including weekends and holidays, provided facilities are used on a cost recovery basis.

CODE: F.001
Community Relations

USE OF BOARD FACILITIES

PROCEDURES

The following procedures will apply to all school bookings

1.0 BOOKING

1.1 All activities utilizing a school outside regular school hours must be booked through the central booking secretary.

1.2 All remaining days outside the 195 school days: weekends, holidays, school breaks, and summer must be booked through the central booking secretary.

1.3 Schools should provide the Central Booking Office with a calendar of known scheduled events requiring after-hour use of facilities for the up-coming year by June 1.

1.4 Fourteen days notice is required from schools for the cancellations of previously booked activities due to unscheduled school use.

1.5 Applications for use of the school must be renewed each year.

1.6 Application deadline for summer facility usage shall be May 1. Approval of application will be based on maintenance requirements.

1.7 There shall be no third party sub-leases of Board facilities.

1.8 Alcohol for special events may be permitted, provided written authorization is obtained from the Board and the necessary license is obtained.

1.9 Churches may book schools for church services throughout the entire year.

2.0 FEES

2.1 Fees for the use of school facilities shall be in accordance with the fee schedule.

2.1.1 All invoices for school rental must be paid within thirty days. Overdue accounts will be charged a 10% interest rate. Overdue accounts will have no further use of facilities until balance is paid.

3.0 RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF APPLICANTS

3.1 All activities will end at 10:00 p.m. unless previously arranged.

3.2 Adult supervision of all activities must be fully assumed by the organization authorized to use the facilities.

3.3 The applicant is responsible to reimburse the School Board for any damage arising from the applicant's use of the facilities.

3.4 Smoking and illegal drugs are not permitted in school buildings or on school property.

3.5 Groups and/or individuals using the Board facilities shall confine their activities to the area(s) designated and the associated corridors, entrances and washrooms.

3.6 When circumstances dictate, the Board shall require that groups booking the school shall pay for pre-determined security needs. The fee will be in addition to the rental charge.

3.7 A minimum of 48 hours cancellation notice is required. If notification is not received you may be charged for the use of the facility.

4.0 CANCELLATIONS

4.1 If the school is closed during the day due to inclement weather, all evening activities held in the school shall be assumed cancelled.

4.2 All evening activities will be cancelled on the Province-wide in-service day.

4.3 Facilities will be made available on a limited basis for day use during Christmas holidays, March break and summer holidays. Availability will be pre-determined on an as-needed basis by the Halifax Regional School Board. Weekend rates will apply outside regular custodian hours for these holidays.

5.0 HOURLY RATES

FACILITY	YOUTH (19 & under)	ADULT ORGANIZATION	PRIVATE SECTOR
Classroom	$2.50	$10.00	$15.00
Cafeteria (meeting)	$5.00	$10.00	$20.00
Cafeteria (food & beverage)	$10.00	$20.00	$40.00
Gymnasium	$5.00	$25.00	$50.00
Audio Visual	$25.00	$25.00	$50.00
Auditorium	$100.00	$100.00	$150.00

WEEKEND RATES

All Rooms except Auditorium	$35.00/hour, minimum 4 hours (includes custodial services)
Auditorium	$100.00/hour, minimum 4 hours plus applicable custodial services

Standing Committee on Human Resources
Meeting with the Halifax Regional School Board
May 4, 2004

Follow Up Question from Mr. John Chataway:

Mr. Chataway requested information on the costs incurred* by the HRSB to make schools available for community use.

There are three categories of expenditures incurred for community rentals:

1. **Door/Hall Monitors** - in many schools, the Board employs door/hall monitors to provide security and control on evenings and weekends, especially in buildings with multiple community groups using the building. The cost for monitors in 2003-04 was budgeted at about $177,000.

2. **Caretaker/Custodial Overtime** - community use does occur at times when the regularly scheduled custodial staff are not in the building. Therefore, overtime costs are incurred to bring custodial staff in to work during and after community use to ensure the school is clean and ready for use on the next school day. These overtime costs were budgeted at about $227,000 in 2003-04.

3. **Administration** - Administrative staff are employed to handle all the booking/scheduling, hiring and pay administration for door/hall monitors, assisting in scheduling custodial overtime, and other tasks associated with the efficient management of community and school use of HRSB buildings during non-school hours. These administrative costs were budgeted at about $131,000 in 2003-04.

* It is recommended that the Committee request additional information from the Department of Education/Scotia Learning regarding the total cost of facilities use, including depreciation costs and standards for calculating utilities costs.

Halifax Regional
School Board

Special Education Report
to the Halifax Regional School Board

November 4, 2003

Halifax Regional
School Board

Office of the Superintendent

November 4, 2003

I am pleased to bring this report on Special Education to the Members of the Halifax Regional School Board. It has been prepared in response to a motion put forward at the regular meeting of the Board, held 26 August 2003:

> *Whereas the Halifax Regional School Board has supported Special Education above and beyond what the board receives from the provincial funding, and whereas the demand for Special Education continues to increase year after year; and whereas, dollars continue to be very limited and the Board recognizes the importance of Strategic Planning; be it resolved that we have a report from staff on the needs-analysis and gaps regarding the current delivery of programs in this area.*

Staff have used the 2003-04 operating budget, and information gathered during the 2002-03 school year, to describe the Special Education and Student Services provided to students of the Halifax Regional School Board. I am confident the document will play an important role in preparing Board Members for Business Planning discussions during this 2003-2004 school year.

In my *Blueprint for Improvement (February 2003)* I wrote that we need to revisit our dialogue about the best way to meet the special needs of students within the parameters of our current mandate, as set by Board policies and by the Department of Education. I believe this report to be an excellent springboard for reviewing the Board's approach to the delivery of special education services – Next Step 3 in my *Blueprint*.

Regards,

Carole Olsen, Superintendent

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Section One: **Overview**

This report was compiled at the request of Members of Halifax Regional School Board (HRSB) to document special education services offered to students in the board, and to identify the funding for these services. It describes how the board is managing its commitments for special education in the 2003-04 school year. Board Members can use this information to get a clear picture of how funds are being spent, and to inform their decision-making for the 2004-05 budget.

The report was prepared by Iris Peet, Coordinator, Program and Student Services, for presentation to the Committee of the Whole by Lorraine Cooke, Executive Director, Program. The information was drawn from existing provincial and board sources, including the following:

- the board budget for 2003-04
- other financial information provided by Dan Walsh, Manager, Budgeting, and Terri Thompson, Coordinator, Financial Planning and Control
- data collected from schools during the 2002-03 school year by the board at the request of the Department of Education, identifying services provided to students in a variety of disciplines, such as psychology and speech pathology
- data provided by the Department of Education in Spring 2003, showing the gap between the minimum recommended ratios for professional services and the current full-time equivalent (FTE) staffing in these areas for all boards in the province.

Context for Special Education

In the planning and delivery of special education, the board is guided by legislation, provincial policy, and special education documents, including the following documents (described below):

- *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, 1982
- *Education Act and Regulations*, 1995-96
- *Special Education Policy Manual*, 1996
- *Challenge for Excellence,* 1999
- *Report of the Special Education Implementation Review Committee* (SEIRC), 2001
- *Learning for Life, Planning for Student Success,* 2002-03
- *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*, 2002.

Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms

Section 15 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms guarantees "equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Education Act and Regulations

Education in the Province of Nova Scotia is governed by the Education Act and the Regulations Under the Act. Parameters for special education are addressed or implied in the following sections:

- Section 64: General Responsibilities and Powers of School Boards
- Section 26: Teachers
- Section 25: Parents.

(See Appendix 1 for relevant excerpts.)

Special Education Policy Manual

In January 1996, the Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture published *The Special Education Policy Manual,* which set the standard for special education in the Province of Nova Scotia. The manual was based on the Statement of Principles shown in Figure 1.

The Policy Manual contains twenty-one policies divided into three sections:

- Section 1: Student Services and Supports
- Section 2: Programming
- Section 3: Partnerships.

(See Appendix 2 for the 21 policies.)

Policy 1.3 provides direction on the funding provided to school boards, which includes general funding based on the total school population in each board, plus a grant based on the total school population in each board. The purpose of the grant is to **"assist with the costs of programming and services for students with special needs."** Special needs are defined to include: cognitive impairments, emotional impairments, hearing disabilities, physical disabilities and/or health impairments, speech impairments and/or communication disorders, sensory impairments (vision/hearing), multiple disabilities, and giftedness.

Policy 1.8 requires that each school board "develop and maintain a written policy and procedures to ensure programming and services are designed for students with special needs." The Halifax Regional School Board published a revised special education policy in June 2001, and revised procedures in January 2002. (See Appendix 4 and Appendix 5.)

Section 2 of the *Special Education Policy Manual* provides the framework for programming for students with special needs. This includes the program planning process (Policy 2.2), Individual Program Plan (IPP) development (Policy 2.6), and transition planning (Policy 2.7).

Section 3 of the *Special Education Policy Manual* outlines the collaboration required to serve students with special needs, beginning with home-school collaboration around educational programs, and including interdepartmental and interagency collaborative efforts.

Figure 1. **Statement of Principles for Special Education in Nova Scotia**[1]

Right to an Appropriate Education

A right to an appropriate education means the fundamental educational human right of every individual to have their unique learning needs responded to on an individual basis.

Right to Quality Education and Qualified Teachers

All students have a right to be taught by licensed, qualified teachers who are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the program match, as much as possible, student strengths and needs.

Inclusive Schooling

"An inclusive school is a school where every child is respected as part of the school community, and where each child is encouraged to learn and achieve as much as possible...a place where all children could learn and where differences are cherished for the richness that they bring" (from Appendix iv: Statement on Integration of *The Working Forum on Inclusive Schools, Creating Schools for All Our Students: What 12 Schools Have to* Say, CEC, 1994).The goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation and learning of all students in school programs and activities. The support services that are designed to meet students' diverse educational needs should be coordinated within the neighbourhood school and, to the extent possible, within grade level/subject area classrooms.

Teachers Responsibility

Teachers are responsible for all students who are placed under their supervision and care. This includes responsibility for safety and well-being, as well as program planning, implementation and evaluation.

Parental Involvement

Parents have an obligation and a responsibility to be an integral part of their child's education and should be involved in program planning from the outset.

All students are expected to achieve the common essential learnings as stated in Public School Programs, 1993-95 to the best of their individual abilities. Within the broad outcome areas, each student's goals will reflect the diversity of their individual strengths and needs.

Individual Program Plan and Accountability

For some students, Individual Program Plans are necessary (Policy 2.2). The development and implementation of Individual Program Plans (IPPs) strengthens student/teacher accountability. Students work toward goals outlined in the IPP and this forms the foundation for the evaluation of student outcomes. The evaluation of outcomes is a component used in measuring school success; however, many other variables will need to be considered.

Collaboration

Collaboration and consultation is essential in supporting students with special needs to ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to program planning and service delivery.

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[1] *Special Education Policy Manual*, NS Department of Education, January 1996, pages 13-14.

Challenge for Excellence

In 1999, the Department of Education published a resource guide for enrichment and gifted education, called *Challenge for Excellence*. HRSB is now entering Year 4 of the implementation of this document. In Year 1, the document was reviewed with all school principals. Since that time a number of schools have applied for, and been granted, banked days to plan and implement programs or activities related to enriching the curriculum for students. To date, a total of 19 schools have completed extensive projects on Enrichment Clusters, Curriculum Compacting, Mentoring, and Differentiation. A current pilot project for gifted students is "Supporting the Gifts and Talents of All Students," funded by a *Learning for Life* grant. *Learning for Life* is described later in this section and in Section Two of this report.

Report of the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC)

In 2000, the Minister of Education established the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC) to do the following: report on the current status of special education policy implementation; identify challenges that publicly funded schools face in providing special education in Nova Scotia; and develop recommendations to address those challenges. The Coordinator of Student Services, Halifax Regional School Board, sat on this committee in her capacity as a member of the provincial Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS) committee.

In June 2001, the committee submitted a report to the Minister of Education containing 34 recommendations. (See Appendix 3 for the Executive Summary.) The report identified the need for an immediate injection of $20 million provincially in the 2002-03 fiscal year, targeted to provide a base level of core services and appropriate service ratios to meet the demand for special education. In response, through the Learning for Life initiative, the Department of Education announced that it will invest more than $35 million over three years to reduce class sizes, hire more core service professionals, purchase more assistive technologies, and fund pilot projects and professional development.

Learning for Life, Planning for Student Success

In 2002, the Department of Education released a multi-year action plan to build on its special education initiatives and address the SEIRC recommendations. The plan, *Learning for Life, Planning for Student Success,* earmarked $17.4 million in funding over three years for professionals, assistive technology, and individualized support for students with special needs. Figure 2 shows details of the funding.

Figure 2. **Targeted Funding Through *Learning for Life***

HRSB Allocation[2]		*Total Allocation Province-wide*[3]			
2003-04		**2003-04**	**2004-05**	**2005-06**	**TOTAL**
$350,500	◄ Pilots ►	$1.0 M	$2.0 M	$3.0 M	$6.0 M
$290,300	◄ Professionals ►	$0.8 M	$2.0 M	$3.2 M	$6.0 M
$484,900	◄ Reading Recovery™ ►	$0.67 M	$1.67 M	$3.2 M	$4.3 M
-	◄ Assistive Technology ►	$0.05 M	$0.35 M	$0.65 M	$1.1 M
$1,125,700	◄ **TOTAL** ►	**$2.5 M**	**$6.0 M**	**$8.9 M**	**$17.4 M**

Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services

Also in 2002, the Department of Education published *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services*. This document is "intended to provide direction to school boards on the role of resource teachers and their expected competencies to assist them in the development of related policy and procedures" (page vii).

The document focuses on two ways to deliver services:

- co-teaching, where a classroom/subject area teacher and a resource teacher work together in the same setting to provide instruction to students in one or more co-teaching formats; and
- providing support in a resource setting.

To help with the implementation of this document, the Department of Education provided a two-day training session in Spring 2003 for a leadership team nominated by board staff. This leadership team is currently providing in-service training to staff selected by the school principal from every school in the board. The sessions will be completed by December 2003 and the cost has been fully covered by the Department of Education through Special Education Implementation Funding.

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[2] To see how these funds have been allocated, refer to Figure 3A on page 11 of this report.

[3] Source: *Learning for Life, Planning for Student Success*, NS Department of Education, p. 19

Section Two: **Budgeting for Special Education**

For the 2003-04 school year the Halifax Regional School Board has budgeted $34,247,000 for special education. Figures 3A and 3B show the special education portion of the board budget. The budget lines are grouped into two categories:

- Program – for staffing that falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the Program department
- School Administration – for staffing that falls primarily under the jurisdiction of the School Administration department.

Sources of Funding

Special education funding comes from three sources:

- General Fund, derived from global grants from the Department of Education
- Supplementary Funds from the municipalities, including:
  - Halifax Supplementary Funding
  - Dartmouth Supplementary Funding
  - County/Bedford Supplementary Funding
- targeted funding from the Department of Education, including Learning for Life funds.

Each line item identifies a staff function. These are described in more detail throughout this section.

Figure 3A. **Special Education Budget, 2003-04**

	General Fund		Supplementary Funds		Learning for Life	
PROGRAM **Student Services – Special Education**	FTE	$	FTE	$	FTE	$
Psychologists	16.0	884,300				
Speech Language Pathologists	17.8	1,074,700			3.0	101,300
Severe Learning Disabilities Specialists *(1)*	15.7	914,800				
Regional Specialists	4.5	306,900				
Social Workers *(2)*			6.0	385,400		
	54.0	3,180,700	6.0	385,400	3.0	101,300
Benefits		245,200		28,900		7,600
Sub-total Salary & Benefits		3,425,900		414,300		108,900
Total Non-Salary & Benefits *(3)*		557,500		20,000		
Total Student Svcs. Special Education	**54.0**	**3,983,400**	**6.0**	**434,300**	**3.0**	**108,900**
SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION **Student Services – Special Education**						
Resource Teachers *(4)*	151.1	8,671,700	51.9	2,925,100		
Learning Centre Teachers	85.0	4,879,100			5.0	168,700
Educational Program Assistants *(5)*	449.1	12,892,000	44.0	1,225,600		
	685.2	26,442,800	95.9	4,150,700	5.0	168,700
Benefits		3,795,800		451,100		12,700
Sub-total Salary & Benefits		30,238,600		4,601,800		181,400
Total Non-Salary & Benefits *(6)*		25,000				
Total Student Svcs. Special Education	**685.2**	**30,263,600**	**95.9**	**4,601,800**	**5.0**	**181,400**
TOTAL SPECIAL EDUCATION	**739.2**	**34,247,000**	**101.9**	**5,036,100**	**8.0**	**290,300**

Notes: *(1)* The Severe Learning Disability program includes $461,600 in funding which, although part of the General Fund from the province, is actually targeted for SLD.

(2) Social workers are funded through Supplementary Funding. For details see Figure 3B.

(3) The $20,000 under Supplementary Funding is the funding for the Therapeutic Swim program in Halifax.

(4) (5) For Supplementary Funding Details, see Figure 3B.

(6) Travel for itinerant teachers.

Figure 3B. **Special Education Budget – Supplementary Funding Detail, 2003-04**

	Halifax		Dartmouth		County/Bedford		Total	
Student Services – Special Education	FTE	$	FTE	$	FTE	$	FTE	$
Social Workers	4.0	258,600	2.0	126,800			6.0	385,400
Teachers	26.0	1,516,500	9.7	551,200	16.2	857,400	51.9	2,925,100
Educational Program Assistants	30.0	835,000	13.0	362,700	1.0	27,900	44.0	1,225,600
	60.0	2,610,100	24.7	1,040,700	17.2	885,300	101.9	4,536,100
Benefits		278,000		109,000		93,000		480,000
Sub-total Salary & Benefits		2,888,100		1,149,700		978,300		5,016,100
Total Non-Salary & Benefits								
Total Student Svcs. Special Education	**60.0**	**2,888,100**		**1,149,700**		**978,300**		**5,016,100**

Program – Student Services – Special Education

The board employs 54 full-time equivalent teachers/specialists who are available to serve students across the entire board on a referral basis. These positions, which are funded through the General Fund under Program staffing, include:

- Psychologists
- Speech Language Pathologists
- Severe Learning Disabilities Specialists
- Regional Specialists.

Secretarial support and office space for these staff are provided in site offices located primarily in schools throughout the board. Psychologists, Speech Language Pathologists, social workers, and other specialist staff are assigned to a site in relative proximity to the schools they serve. Day-to-day supervision is provided by the principal of the school. A Student Services Facilitator is assigned as a liaison between the staff and the Student Services Regional office. A budget, approved by the board, covers the costs for consumable materials, such as test protocols and other supplies and materials required by the staff. Large purchases (for example, when tests are revised and the current supply becomes obsolete) require a separate request to the board.

Psychologists

16 FTE General Fund

The Halifax Regional School Board employs psychologists, registered in Psychology with the Nova Scotia Board of Examiners, who offer service to every school within the board. Service is based on referral and requires parental consent. Referrals are accepted through the school planning team.

Psychologists provide specialized knowledge and skills in the areas of assessment, behavioural programming, short-term counselling, and consultation in relation to curriculum and social outcomes for students. Psychologists also provide leadership, under the direction of the school principal, in times of school-based crisis or tragic events.

Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs)

17.8 FTE General Fund

The Halifax Regional School Board employs Speech Language Pathologists (SLPs) with full membership to the Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists (CASLPA). Service is offered to every school in the board on a referral basis with parental consent. Referrals are accepted through the school planning team process outlined in the procedures for the Special Education Policy of the board.

SLPs provide specialized knowledge and skills in the areas of communication development and difficulties and how these impact on curriculum and social outcomes for students. Services to students may include assessment, direct therapy, as well as activities and techniques which contribute to school programs (as part of a student's IPP) and home programs.

Severe Learning Disabilities (SLD) Specialists

15.7 FTE General Fund

Before 1996, $1.3 million in funding was available through the Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA) to provide private school tuition for students with Severe Learning Disabilities. As of 1996 these funds were made available to school boards to help them provide specialists within the board. The funds are designated and overseen by a provincial committee. Each board was required to set up a committee to determine the delivery model, and to report to the Department of Education annually on its use of the funds, the pre- and post-test results of the students, as well as some demographic information. Changes to the program delivery model must also be reported to the Department of Education.

Referrals are accepted in April of each year for students entering Grades 4 to12 the following year. Each family of schools has one itinerant teacher serving a maximum of ten students in five schools. The one exception is for the Duncan MacMillan/Musquodoboit families of schools, which share a teacher who serves a maximum of ten students. The SLD program also has funding for 0.5 of a psychologist to conduct assessments required by the program (after acceptance), as well as short-term counselling and referrals to outside agencies.

Regional Specialists

4.5 FTE General Fund

The Regional Specialists include:

- 2 *Assistive Technology Specialists*
  These specialists support the school team by providing assessment and specialized knowledge and skills in the area of assistive/adaptive devices and services, and professional development for both professional and paraprofessional staff. Service is obtained through a referral process which has been communicated to the schools. The specialists maintain a loan library and inventory of equipment and materials for student trial and staff professional development.
- 1.5 *Regional Behaviour Specialists*
  These specialists support the school team by providing specialized knowledge and skills in the development, implementation and evaluation of non-aversive behaviour programming for individual students. Service may include functional assessment, program development and, in some cases, modelling to show teachers appropriate responses to student behaviour. Referrals may be made to outside agencies. The Regional Behaviour Specialists are also certified trainers in Non-Violent Crisis Intervention and provide certification to both professional and paraprofessional staff on a rotational basis.
- 1.0 *Autism Specialist*
  This specialist supports the school team by providing specialized knowledge and skills in the area of assessment and programming for students with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Service is obtained through a referral process which has been communicated to the schools. The Regional Autism Specialist provides professional development opportunities for both professional and paraprofessional staff. Considerable collaboration is involved with both the autism team at the IWK Hospital, as well as the Early Identification Intervention Services (EIIS) transition coordinator (for identified students in the first year of school).

School Administration – Student Services – Special Education

Under School Administration – Student Services – Special Education, the General Fund provides funding for 685.2 full-time equivalent positions. These positions include:

- Resource Teachers
- Learning Centre Teachers
- Educational Program Assistants (EPAs).

Supplementary funds provide an additional 95.9 full-time equivalent positions for:

- Resource Teachers
- Specialized Learning Centres
- Behaviour Specialists
- Music and Swim Programs
- Educational Program Assistants.

Resource Teachers

151.1	FTE General Fund
10.2	FTE Halifax Supplementary Funding
5.7	FTE Dartmouth Supplementary Funding
16.2	FTE County/Bedford Supplementary Funding

The role of resource teachers is described in the provincial document *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* (NS Department of Education, 2002). Resource teachers are assigned to schools according to a ratio approved by the school board:

- Elementary – 1 resource teacher for every 300 students
- Junior High – 1 resource teacher for every 350 students
- Senior High – 1 resource teacher for every high school.

Learning Centre Teachers

85	FTE General Fund
5	FTE Learning For Life*

In addition to resource support, some schools are allocated Learning Centre support. This support is designed to help students who need more intensive support than is currently possible through the resource program. Learning Centre support is reviewed annually and assigned based on the school profile. Assignment is based on a 0.5 or 1.0 FTE allocation.

* Learning for Life is described on page 18.

Educational Program Assistants (EPAs)

449.1	FTE General Fund
30.0	FTE Halifax Supplementary Funding
13.0	FTE Dartmouth Supplementary Funding
1.0	FTE County/Bedford Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)
4.2	FTE County/Bedford Supplementary Funding (Family Allocation)**

Educational Program Assistants (EPA) are allocated annually to schools after a careful review of the needs of each school within the board. EPAs are assigned to schools based on the total number of students requiring support in a particular school. This is considered a school-based staffing allocation, which is then scheduled by the school principal. Throughout the year, as changes arise to the number of students on which the total allocation was based, staff will be reassigned to meet the needs of the students. All reassignments are handled by the Human Resource Services Department, according to the CUPE agreement.

** The 4.2 FTE results from family-based decision-making, and so it is not reflected in the approved Special Education budget.

Enhanced Service through Supplementary Funding

The Supplementary Fund augments and enhances programs and services, and provides students with improved opportunities for learning. In the area of resource staffing, it allows principals to attract and keep resource staff in full-time positions by augmenting the staffing allocation achieved through staffing ratios. In addition, some positions, such as social workers, are funded totally through Supplementary Funding. For this reason, social workers are currently available only in Halifax and Dartmouth Supplementary-funded schools.

Social Workers

4 FTE Halifax Supplementary Funding
2 FTE Dartmouth Supplementary Funding

The Halifax Regional School Board employs 6.0 full-time equivalent social workers who have a Master's Degree in Social Work and who are eligible for registration with the NS Association of Social Workers. The school social worker provides professional support to school personnel, students and their families in a way that maximizes student learning. As part of the school team they collaborate with school staff to respond to the needs of students who are experiencing personal, family, or social difficulties. School social workers maintain close contact with agencies, residential facilities and professionals serving the students who reside in their area of responsibility.

Behavioural Services for P–6

7 FTE Halifax Supplementary Funding
2 FTE Dartmouth Supplementary Funding

The following behavioural services receive supplementary funding to provide for behaviour specialists/teachers for students who require behavioural programming as part of their IPP. These children will have an IPP with outcomes related to behaviour. The role of the behaviour specialist/teacher is to provide support in the development and implementation of the behaviour plan.

Family of Schools	Service	Source of Funding	FTE	Grades
Queen Elizabeth *and* St. Patrick's	• Behaviour Specialist	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Family Allocation)	1	P-6
	• Inglis Street School Child Development Class	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	1	4-6
	• St. Joseph's-A. MacKay Child Development Class	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	1	P-3
Halifax West *and* J.L. Ilsley	• Child Development Support Team	2 FTE from Central Allocation and 2 FTE from the Family Allocation	4	P-6
Prince Andrew	• Behaviour specialist	Dartmouth Supplementary Funding	1	P-6
Dartmouth HS	• Shannon Park School Child Development Class	Dartmouth Supplementary Fund	1	P-6

Specialized Learning Centres

8 FTE Halifax Supplementary Funding
2 FTE Dartmouth Supplementary Funding

A Specialized Learning Centre is a learning centre that is funded entirely through supplementary funding. These were formerly referred to as "special classes" or "congregated classes." The students are often multi-challenged, requiring a very high level of care.

Specialized Learning Centres	Source of Funding	FTE	Grades
Westmount Elementary School	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	2	P-6
Gorsebrook JH	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	1	7-9
Queen Elizabeth HS	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	2	10-12
Halifax West HS	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	1	10-12
St. Patrick's HS	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	2	10-12
Dartmouth HS	Dartmouth Supplementary Fund	2	10-12

Other Special Support

Service	Source of Funding	FTE	Grades
Music (Itinerant) serving students who are in supplementary funded Specialized Learning Centres.	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	0.4	P-12
Therapeutic Swim Program The current program can serve a maximum of 24 students in two sessions at the APSEA pool. A committee has been formed to set guidelines for accepting students into this program. The Coordinator of Student Services will provide board members with information about the use of supplementary funds to inform their decision-making on the supplementary fund budget.	Halifax Supplementary Funding (Central Allocation)	0.4	P-12
Elementary Guidance For the 2003-04 school year, two elementary guidance positions were included in the Dartmouth Supplementary Fund budget to pilot elementary Comprehensive Guidance at Shannon Park School and Ian Forsyth School. These are currently one-year positions. Information on these pilots can be provided to board members on request.	Dartmouth Supplementary Fund	2.0	P-6

Learning for Life

During the 2002-03 school year, the Department of Education released *Learning for Life, Planning for Student Success* (described on page 8 of this report). As a result of funding associated with this initiative, the Halifax Regional School Board received funding in a number of areas, including the following:

• Reading Recovery™	$484,900
• Special Education Pilot Projects	$350,500
• Core Professional Services	$290,900

Reading Recovery™

As part of the *Learning for Life* initiative, the Department of Education promises full implementation of Reading Recovery, as needed, to all Grade 1 students in Nova Scotia by 2005. Reading Recovery targets Grade 1 students who are identified as being in the lowest 20% of their class in reading and writing achievement. It is also one of the four key components of the Active Young Readers initiative, which provides a comprehensive strategy to enhance the literacy development of students in Primary to Grade 3.

For the 2003-04 school year, the Halifax Regional School Board is implementing Reading Recovery in all schools that implemented the program in the 2002-03 school year from their resource allocation, as well as all schools considered Phase One for *Planning for Improvement.*

Special Education Pilot Projects

Each board was required to submit proposals for projects to the Department of Education for approval before the funds could be released. During the 2002-03 school year, lead principals provided schools with information about the criteria for proposal submissions. The Department received proposals from several schools, including Queen Elizabeth High School, Harrietsfield Elementary, and Oldfield/Waverley-LC Skerry. Additional proposals were developed by Student Services with a board-based perspective. Proposals were submitted to the Department of Education and revisions required by the Department of Education were incorporated into the pilots. Figure 4 outlines the approved pilot projects for 2003-04.

Figure 4. **Pilot Projects for Special Education, Funded by *Learning for Life* in 2003-04**

Project	*Funding Proposal*
Supporting the Gifts and Talents of All Students This project will provide a full-time staff person with experience and expertise in the implementation of school-wide enrichment, as outlined in the provincial document *Challenge for Excellence*. (*Challenge for Excellence* is described in Section One of this report.)	$ 57,365
Transition This project will provide a full-time staff person to work primarily with every high school in the board to ensure appropriate transition planning for students with special needs.	$ 44,875
Oral Language and Phonological Development This project was submitted by Oldfield/Waverley Memorial- LC Skerry, and intends to evaluate and remediate the students identified as requiring intense literacy skill remediation.	$ 18,687
TEACCH TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children) is an individualized assessment and treatment program. This project will provide a full-time staff person trained in TEACCH methodology in three schools within the board.	$ 89,230
STARS This project, submitted by QEHS, will provide .33 FTE directed at supporting "Students at Risk", specifically those who have already experienced failure at the High School level.	$ 16,120
Discrete Trial Teaching This project will provide the support of two psychologists for schools new to using discrete trial teaching for students with special needs, primarily those with a diagnosis of autistic spectrum disorder. Staff will not work directly with students, but rather will support program development and modelling.	$101,865
Multi-modal Communication *[deferred]* A seventh pilot was submitted and approved; however, appropriate specialized staff were not available for the duration of the project. The funds will be carried over to cover staffing costs from April to July 2004.	***$ 22,450***
	$350,592

Core Professional Services

8 FTE

During the 2002-03 school year, the Department of Education conducted a gap analysis of the core professional services available in each board in the province, comparing actual staffing levels with recommended staffing levels. Figure 5 shows the results of the gap analysis for Halifax Regional School Board.

In response to this analysis, the Department of Education has provided targeted funding to HRSB to increase Learning Centres by 5 FTE teachers, and Speech Language Pathologists by 3 FTE positions. This reduced the board's gap, as identified by the Department of Education, from 13.8 Resource/Learning Centre teachers to 8.8, and reduced the gap in Speech Language Pathologists from 10.6 to 7.6.

For related information, including the average caseloads in the board and the number of students on waiting lists, see "Gap Analysis of Students Waiting for Service" on page 28 of this report.

Figure 5. **Gap Analysis for Core Professional Services***

	Resource/ Learning Centre Teachers	Speech Language Pathologists	Psychologists	Student Services Administration	
Minimum recommended ratio	1:200	1:2000	1:2500	1:7000	
FTEs to meet the ratio	283.7	28.4	22.7	8.1	
FTEs for 2002-03	269.9	17.8	15.0	4.0	
Gap identified in 2002-03	13.8	10.6	7.7	4.1	
Gap remaining after core service initiative	8.8	7.6	7.7	4.1	
Funds needed to fill the gap	$545,600	$495,520	$459,690	$307,500	**$1,808,310 TOTAL**

**Data by Board, based on a projected enrollment of 56,742 students at the time of the analysis in 2002-03. FTE positions are based on a combination of funding from the General Fund and Supplementary Funds.*

Section Three: **Other Student Services – Student Support**

In addition to the special education programs and services described in the previous section, students with special needs have access to services provided to the general student population, including guidance counsellors and tutors. These appear in the board budget under Student Services – Student Support.

Guidance Counsellors

The Public School Program describes the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program as "a total component of a comprehensive school system. It is designed as a total school program with defined outcomes and benefits for all students. The program activities and services are developmental in nature and form an integral part of the educational experience from Grades primary to 12." (School Programs, page B-20)

The program covers four domains: personal, social, educational, and career. Curriculum and service components include guidance curriculum, life/career planning, professional services (counselling), and program management. In April 2003, as part of a series of documents relating to Student Services, a document entitled "Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program" was issued by the Department of Education. This document identifies one of the roles of the school board to be the allocation of "qualified guidance counsellor time in schools according to the provincially recommended student counsellor ratio" of **500:1 for both elementary and secondary schools**.

In May/June 2003, each secondary school within the Halifax Regional School Board was surveyed about whether they were implementing comprehensive guidance and counselling, and their training needs if they wish to implement the program. Additional training for schools is being arranged for the 2003-04 school year.

Guidance counsellors are assigned to secondary schools using the staffing ratios approved by the board. For Junior High the ratio is 1:500. P-6 schools are not assigned guidance counsellors, with a few exceptions. For example, as a result of identified needs in the communities of East Preston and North Preston, a guidance counsellor is shared between Bell Park Elementary and Nelson Whynder Elementary. Also, for the 2003-04 school year, two positions were approved as part of the Supplementary Fund budget in Dartmouth to pilot Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling at Ian Forsyth Elementary and Shannon Park Elementary.

Training for schools wishing to offer the Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling Program is provided and funded through the Student Services Division of the Department of Education. The Department of Education has a full-time Guidance Consultant to support the boards.

Tutors

The Halifax Regional School Board provides some home-based instruction for students unable to attend school for an extended period (more than three weeks). For these students, a limited number of hours of home-based tutoring can be provided by a qualified teacher. Requests are accepted by Student Services from the school. This service is not meant to replace a full school program. Correspondence courses are available in some subjects at the secondary level, and may be provided to students who are absent for a semester or full year.

In certain situations, students who are prevented from attending school for non-medical reasons may also be supported by a tutor.

Section Four: **Service Delivery**

Continuum of Service

The Halifax Regional School Board provides a continuum of service for students with a variety of intervention needs. For the vast majority of students, the interventions are minor and occur as part of the regularly prescribed program. These students are able to meet and often exceed the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum. A relatively small percentage of students require some planned strategies or adaptations to meet or exceed the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum. For an even smaller percentage of students – typically 3% provincially – an individualized program plan will be required, based on the student's strengths and needs.

Figure 6 shows the continuum of service for students with minor, moderate and extensive needs.

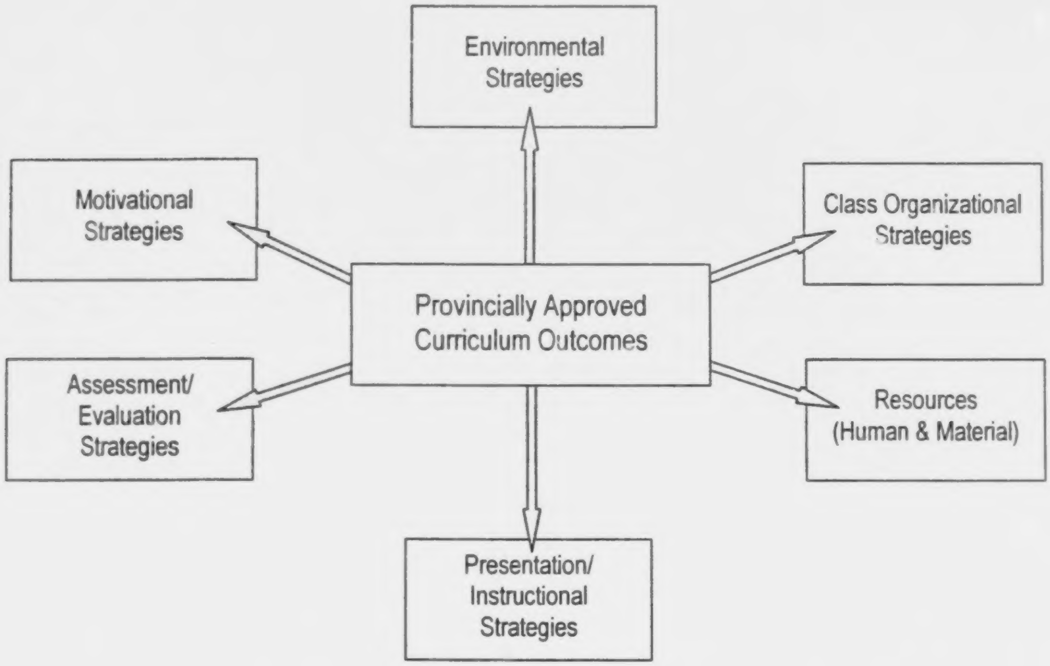
Figure 6. **Continuum of Service for Students with Minor, Moderate and Extensive Needs**

	Minor Needs	Moderate Needs	Extensive Needs
Programming	Student's needs are addressed in the regular classroom program. Interventions are minor. Most students are served in this way.	Student remains in the regular program with planned strategies or adaptations to enable the student to succeed in the program.	Individualized Program Plan is required to meet the student's special needs.
Staff Supports	Normal support by classroom teacher(s).	Teacher(s) plan specific strategies to help the student. Collaboration with other professionals and/or a program planning team may be required.	Program Planning Team collaboratively plans, implements and evaluates the Individual Program Plan.
Expected Outcomes	Student is expected to achieve the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum.	Changes are required in instructional strategies and/or evaluation methods and/or support services, but the outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum are maintained. Changes are documented in a cumulative file. Parents are informed.	Outcomes of the provincially approved curriculum must be changed to meet student needs. Written IPP includes annual and specific individualized outcomes. Signatures of parents/ guardian indicate agreement on the IPP.

Adaptive Strategies for Students with Moderate Needs

For students with moderate needs, *adaptations* may be planned in a number of areas, including those shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. **Adaptations for Students with Moderate Needs (involving no changes to the provincially approved curriculum outcomes)**[4]


Environmental Strategies
Motivational Strategies
Class Organizational Strategies
Provincially Approved Curriculum Outcomes
Assessment/ Evaluation Strategies
Resources (Human & Material)
Presentation/ Instructional Strategies

► *Class Organizational strategies*

Class organization strategies involve more than consideration of the physical arrangement of classroom space, although that is one aspect. They also include the ways in which students work with each other and with teachers in order to achieve the curriculum outcomes. For example, strategies might include cooperative learning groups, peer tutoring, or flexible grouping.

► *Resources (Human and Material)*

Resource-based learning focuses on the abundance of learning opportunities that exist beyond a course textbook. Some students have difficulties with reading and/or writing and need planned strategies to address these difficulties; however, **this should not prevent them from accessing the curriculum**. Print, particularly the textbook, is not the only source of information. There are other resources available in most schools and/or communities that appeal to a wide variety of learning needs.

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[4] Source: *Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* (NS Department of Education, 2002). The descriptions of the strategies following the figure are also from this document.

In addition to material resources, human resources (such as behavioural specialists, EPAs, tutors, and others) can also provide support for students with moderate learning needs. Such supports should be "only as special as necessary" to enable the student to succeed.

► *Presentation/Instructional Strategies*

Providing different presentation strategies involves making decisions about how to communicate new knowledge, skills, understandings, and/or desired behaviours to students. A teacher's knowledge of students' strengths, needs, interests, abilities and learning styles contributes significantly in choosing appropriate strategies. Examples of differentiation in presentation/instruction include offering different assignments, adjusting pace, and providing study guides.

► *Assessment/Evaluation Strategies*

Assessment and evaluation should reflect the student's achievement of outcomes. Providing different forms of assessment/evaluation does not change the outcomes for students with moderate needs, but rather provides options for students to demonstrate what they know and are able to do. Examples include oral testing instead of (or in addition to) written testing, or extended time to complete a task.

► *Motivational Strategies*

Interactions between a teacher and his or her students can be planned to facilitate learning. The student's degree of commitment to the learning process and the maintenance of a positive learning climate in the classroom should be part of instructional planning. A proactive approach can prevent many difficulties and can facilitate behavioural programming for individual students, should it be needed. Examples of motivational strategies include feedback and reinforcement.

► *Environmental Strategies*

Learning in life occurs in a wide range of environments. There are many environments, both within the school and outside, that can facilitate effective learning. Exploring various locations and adapting the physical aspects of the learning environment can accommodate a variety of learning needs and preferences. Examples of environmental strategies in the classroom might include specific seating arrangements, an organized storage space, or variable lighting controls.

Individualized Programming for Students with Extensive Needs

Students with *extensive needs* require individualized programming. While approximately 3% of the board's students require IPPs, the vast majority of this support is provided by the classroom teacher with the support of the Resource/Learning Centre teacher. More intensive support from Resource/Learning Centre teachers is required by about half of these students.

Behavioural Support

Supporting students with varying degrees of behavioural challenge is a major issue for school staff. A range of supports, from the classroom teacher to Regional Behaviour Specialists, is available within the board.

Every teacher uses behavioural strategies in the classroom. It is not uncommon for teachers to plan interventions for individual students within the classroom. When a teacher requires support to plan the interventions, other teachers or support staff would generally make suggestions for intervention through the school team process. If it becomes necessary to develop a more detailed plan to deal with more serious behaviours, the school team will make a referral to the school psychologist.

When such a referral is made and the school receives parental permission, the school psychologist will observe the student, document the behaviour(s) and frequency, and develop a more detailed plan. This plan will be documented so that all staff who work with the student will be aware of and be able to implement the plan.

In some cases, the school psychologist may not have the time to monitor the implementation of a long-term plan. When necessary, other behaviour specialists are available for these long-term cases.

Through Supplementary Funding, Halifax West, J.L. Ilsley, Queen Elizabeth, St. Patrick's, Dartmouth, and the Prince Andrew families of schools have family-of-school-based supports. These take a variety of forms depending on the needs and wishes of the family of schools. Each family of schools in this group is given one professional and one paraprofessional from the Central Allocation. In some cases the family of schools uses part of its Family Allocation to supplement the support. Three families of schools – Queen Elizabeth, St. Patrick's and Dartmouth High School – have an elementary class for the short-term placement of students. The Prince Andrew family has a full-time behaviour specialist working on an itinerant basis with elementary schools within the family. Queen Elizabeth and St. Patrick's share a position for itinerant specialist support.

The support team for the Halifax West/ J.L. Ilsley families includes a behaviour specialist, teachers, and Educational Program Assistants. Figure 8 provides statistical data related to the services they have provided.

Figure 8. **Child Development Support Team (CDST) Statistics**

2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003	2003-2004
• 20 students • 1 classroom program	• 33 new students • 11 previous students • 9 classroom programs	• 32 students – individual or small-group strategies • 24 students – individual behaviour IPPs	• 8 consultations • 7 classroom programs (management plans & consultations) • 30 previous students

The board employs 1.5 Regional Behaviour Specialists. During the 2002-03 school year, the Regional Behaviour Specialists handled 54 referrals, including:

- 33 students who were discontinued during or at the end of the school year, with a referral back to the school planning team for ongoing support from the school psychologist
- 5 students who were referred to a Family Specialist
- 16 students who continued on the Regional caseload.

Students Served in 2002-03

Figure 9 shows the number of students in the board who received moderate to extensive adaptations and supports in 2002-03. The number of IPPs reported (representing students with extensive needs) was 3.4% of the total population. Therefore, the number of students with moderate needs would be approximately 17.6% of the student population when the data was collected. At that time, approximately 1.2% of students were waiting for service from a Resource/Learning Centre teacher.

Figure 9. **Students Receiving Moderate to Extensive Adaptations and Supports in 2002-03**

	Moderate to Extensive Adaptations and Supports				Minor/Indirect Interventions
Support	***Elementary***	***Junior High***	***Senior High***	***Total***	***Total***
+50% time outside the classroom	211	118	168	497	
Resource	4785	1761	1112	7658	2494
Psychology	811	213	66	1090	650
Behaviour	110	72	4	186	93
Social Worker	397	209	104	710	271
Speech Language Pathologist	1629	99	22	1750	391
Severe Learning Disabilities	65	54	24	143	34
Total number of students ▶				**12,034**	**3933**
% of students ▶				21%	7%

Gap Analysis

Figure 10 shows the following: the average caseloads for Resource/Learning Centre teachers, Speech Language Pathologists, and psychologists in the board; the number of students on the waiting list; and the number of full-time equivalent staff needed to eliminate the waiting list.

Figure 10. **Gap Analysis of Students Waiting for Service**

	Resource/ Learning Centre Teachers	Speech Language Pathologists	Psychologists
FTE staff	269.9	17.8	16.0
Average caseload for direct support to students with moderate to extensive needs	30.2	121.3	112.5
Average caseload for indirect support to students	11.65	-	-
Waiting list	Elementary: 528 Junior High: 149 Senior High: 31	374	523 (approximately 3-4 per school on average)
FTE staff needed to fill the gap	**8.8**	**7.6**	**7.7**

When the data was collected in April/May 2003, 708 students were identified as waiting for service through a Resource/Learning Centre. A number of these students would have received service before the end of the school year. The gap analysis for Resource/Learning Centres, conducted by the Department of Education, identified a need for 13.8 additional FTE positions to meet the core professional service ratios targeted by the Department. Based on an average caseload of 30 students per FTE position, approximately 414 of these students could have been on an active caseload if the board had the additional 13.8 positions recommended in the Department's gap analysis.

The addition of 3 FTE Speech Language Pathologists for the 2003-04 school year should significantly reduce the waiting list. Based on the waiting list identified here, and using average caseloads, the number of students identified should receive service during the 2003-04 school year.

The gap for psychology service has not been addressed in the current budget, but will be a priority for new funding available through targeted core service funding from the Department of Education. The addition of the 7.7 positions identified in the Department's gap analysis should more than accommodate the waiting list for this service.

Section Five: **Procedures Relating to Special Education**

Appeals

Provincial Regulation 6(2) of the Education Act recognizes the obligation of the board to establish its own appeal procedure regarding the placement of students with special needs. The regulation states:

> *The obligation of a school board pursuant to subsection (1) is, in the case of the placement of a student with special needs, subject to*
> (a) *any appeal procedure established by the school board; and*
> (b) *the appeal procedure prescribed in Section (53)."*

The Halifax Regional School Board Policy 11.1 states:

> *In cases where a parent/guardian of a child with special needs does not agree with the outcomes and/or placement indicated on the individual program plan, they may request an appeal as outlined in the School Board and Ministerial Appeal Guide, Department of Education, 1999.* (See Appendix 4.)

The steps for instigating a School Board Appeal are outlined in the Procedures, Halifax Regional School Board Special Education Policy, Section 6.0. (See Appendix 5.)

Special Placements

The Education Act 64(2)(d) states that school boards shall "develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers in age." Within the Halifax Regional School Board, the neighbourhood school is the point of entry for all students.

For a small number of students who are living temporarily in a residential facility, it may not be feasible to attend the neighbourhood school, and so a protocol has been developed to accommodate these students. (See Appendix 6.)

Guidelines for Tuition Agreements

The Education Act, Section 64(3)(c) states:

> *A school board may enter into agreements, including tuition agreements, for the provision of services and benefits.*

The decision to enter into an agreement is a discretionary power of boards. In response to a request from boards, the Department of Education developed guidelines for board consideration. (See Appendix 7.) These guidelines were included in the Procedures of the Halifax Regional School Board Policy.

Requests for consideration are accepted only for students who have a developed and implemented Individual Program Plan and who are registered in and attending a school within the board. The decision of the Special Education Review Committee is provided to the parent and school in writing.

Section Six: **Collaboration with Other Agencies**

Student Services staff are involved in a number of committees, advisory boards and other groups relating to their area of expertise. Examples of committees with an interdepartmental focus are described below.

Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority (APSEA)

Programs and services offered through APSEA are designed to support school districts in serving students who are hearing impaired, visually impaired, and deaf/blind. Currently, between 80 and 100 children are receiving service from specialists for the visually impaired. Data has not been received at this time for the specialists for the hearing impaired.

Early Identification and Intervention Services (EIIS)

EIIS is an interdepartmental project through the Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC). Departments and agencies that are involved include Health, Education, Community Services, Justice, and Recreation, as well as some community partners.

EIIS is an initiative for children aged 0–6 who have been diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder (ASD). The Halifax Regional School Board has membership on the Project Leadership Team, which is the decision-making body for the Central Region project.

Currently the HRSB has one full-time staff person working as a transition facilitator for these children entering school. The project has also provided a lending library for teachers of the students in the project.

Special Education Programs and Services (SEPS)

The SEPS committee represents a number of government departments, including Health, Community Services, and Education, and includes significant involvement from groups representing students with special needs. The Halifax Regional School Board's Coordinator of Programs and Student Services currently represents the Coordinators of Student Services across the province on this committee. The SEPS committee was instrumental in the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC), and will continue to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations.

Child and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC)

The Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) includes senior officials from the Nova Scotia Departments of Education, Justice, Health, and Community Services, the NS Sport and Recreation Commission, and the NS Youth Secretariat. CAYAC promotes coordinated policy development and comprehensive service delivery to achieve better outcomes for children and youth in the province. CAYAC promotes and facilitates interdepartmental initiatives at the provincial and regional level.

Selected Excerpts from

The Education Act, 1995-96

Section 64
General Responsibilities and Powers of School Boards

64(2) A School Board shall, in accordance with this Act and the regulations,

(a) make provisions for the education and instruction of all students enrolled in its schools and programs;

(d) develop and implement educational programs for students with special needs within regular instructional settings with their peers in age, in accordance with the regulations and the Minister's policies and guidelines.

Section 26
Teachers

26(1) It is the duty of a teacher in a public school to:

(c) implement teaching strategies that foster a positive learning environment aimed at helping students achieve learning outcomes;

(f) acknowledge and, to the extent reasonable, accommodate differences in learning styles;

(g) participate in individual program planning and implement individual program plans, as required for students with special needs

Section 25
Parents

25(2) Parents of students with special needs shall be afforded the opportunity to participate in the development of an individualized program for their children.

25(3) Where

(a) the parent of a child with special needs does not agree with the individualized program plan that has been developed for that child;

and

(b) the disagreement cannot be resolved by a school board appeal process,

the parent or the school board may initiate an appeal as prescribed by the regulations.

The Special Education Policy Manual

Nova Scotia Department of Education and Culture
January 1996 (amended October 1997)

Policy Statements

SECTION 1- Student Services and Supports

1.1 The Department of Education and Culture is responsible for establishing policies and guidelines regarding programming and services for students with special needs.

1.2 The Department of Education and Culture and school boards are responsible for ensuring that all new school buildings or major renovations of existing buildings provide equal access for all.

1.3 In addition to general formula funding, the Department of Education and Culture provides a grant to each school board to assist with the costs of programming and services for students with special needs.

1.4 The Department of Education and Culture monitors and reviews matters affecting the educational progress, health and comfort of students.

1.5 School boards are required to provide an appropriate education for all students who reside within their jurisdiction who are of school age.

1.6 School boards are responsible for designating administrative responsibility for special education programs and services at the superintendency or assistant superintendency level.

1.7 The Department of Education and Culture maintains a Learning Resources and Technology Division. The division can assist in the design, production, acquisition, evaluation and distribution of non-print learning resources to support programming and services for students with special needs.

1.8 Each school board shall develop and maintain a written policy and procedures to ensure that programming and services are designed for students with special needs.

SECTION 2- Programming

2.1 Each school board is required to provide appropriate programming for all students with special needs and must use allocated resources for this purpose.

2.2 Each school board is responsible for establishing a process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs.

2.3 Each school board shall establish, at the school level, program planning teams responsible for programming and monitoring.

2.4 Each school is responsible for involving and informing parents/guardians with respect to decisions regarding assessments designed for their child.

2.5 Each school board is responsible for ensuring that appropriate assessments are carried out by qualified personnel.

2.6 An individual program plan (IPP), based on the student's strengths and needs will be developed and implemented for every student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable.

2.7 Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

2.8 School boards should establish procedures for regular evaluation of programs and services for students with special needs.

2.9 Each school board is required to provide access to school records.

SECTION 3- Partnerships

3.1 Parents/guardians have a right to be involved and informed about their children's educational programs.

3.2 School boards are responsible for ensuring that the individual program planning process is collaborative in meeting students' needs.

3.3 School boards are responsible for collaborating in the development and provision of programs and services for students with special needs.

3.4 The Department of Education and Culture is responsible for actively participating in interdepartmental and interagency collaborative efforts in the design and implementation of appropriate programs and services for students with special needs.

Report of the Special Education Implementation Review Committee

Executive Summary

The Special Education Implementation Review was initiated in May 2000 by the Minister of Education to report on the current status of the implementation of the *Special Education Policy* released in 1996. A committee, which included representatives of parents, teachers, organizations representing children and youth with disabilities, school boards, universities, and government departments involved in providing services to children and youth with special needs, was established. In carrying out its mandate, the Special Education Implementation Review Committee reported on the current status of special education policy implementation, identified challenges to the provision of special education programs and services in Nova Scotia public schools, and developed recommendations to address these challenges.

The committee received background information on legislation, various special education policy documents, and relevant reports from other provinces. Presentations on specific topics such as special education funding, interagency collaboration, accountability considerations, and intensive behaviour intervention programming and strategies were incorporated into the meeting schedule between August 2000 and May 2001.

Public input was obtained through a survey questionnaire, which was made available to the general public and to other stakeholders. Respondents were asked to consider eight special education policy – related areas and to indicate what they believed to be significant improvements and difficulties in supporting children and youth with special needs since the policy was implemented in 1996 and to make suggestions for improvement. A focus group process was utilized to explore issues in more depth with parents, students, teachers, teacher assistants, school and student services administrators, school board members, and other professionals who serve students with special needs. Focus group sessions were also conducted for the Acadian and Francophone communities and for representatives from the African Nova Scotia and Mi'kmaw communities. A report of the findings from the survey and the focus group sessions was prepared by Dr. Victor Thiessen and Barbara Cottrell.

The committee acknowledges that schools and boards are currently attempting to provide a wide range of programming and services for students with special needs, within financial and other resource limitations. There is recognition by the committee that additional improvements are needed to address ongoing and new challenges to meeting the diverse learning needs of students.

The review findings indicate that progress has been made in implementing many of the special education policy areas. Inclusive schooling, the program planning process, resources and supports, and the identification and assessment of students with special needs were most often cited as significantly improved. However, the need for more resources and supports to fully implement the policy was highlighted by both survey respondents and focus groups. Inadequate funding is perceived to be at the heart of limiting progress in the implementation of the special education policy. Indeed, this lack of resources is jeopardizing the implementation of the policy, which has an impact on all students, not just those with special needs. In terms of the program planning process, further efforts need to be made to ensure that meaningful parental involvement occurs.

Suggestions were made for establishing clearer criteria and definitions both for access to core special education services and for the distinct roles of the relevant stakeholders. The need for enhanced communication among the public education system and its partners and for a well-defined system of accountability were also identified as key issues to be addressed. In all, the committee made the following 34 recommendations:

Inclusive Schooling

1. The Department of Education and school boards should develop a communication plan to improve understanding of inclusive schooling and programming and services for students with special needs. The communication plan will describe how to access existing documents and will support the development of a series of information brochures. The brochures should describe programming and services available and how they can be accessed. Brochures should cover, but not be limited to, the following:

   - inclusive schooling
   - identification and assessment
   - program planning process
   - appeal process
   - transitions

   Stakeholder groups should be consulted regarding the development of the plan and materials, and the documents should emphasize clear explanations using plain language.

2. The Department of Education and school boards should establish common terminology in special education (e.g., adaptations/modifications, EPA/SPA/TA, resource teachers/PST/LST, etc.). Further, the Department of Education should clarify the term "emotional impairment" in Policy 1.3.

Professional Development

3. The Department of Education, university faculties of education, school boards, and the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) should collaborate on the development and implementation of an ongoing in-service plan for teachers, administrators, professional support staff, and teacher assistants on programming and services for students with special needs. The plan should encourage
   - involvement of teachers and teacher assistants in the design and development of in-service plans to address local needs
   - participation of school board members, parents, university education faculty, and professionals from outside education who work with children and youth with special needs.

   The plan should increase knowledge and understanding of specific disabilities and the link between assessment and instructional practices and should focus on a variety of teaching strategies, adaptations, learning styles, individual program planning, meaningful parental involvement, teacher-student communication, behavioural issues, and leadership.

   The Department of Education and school boards should provide sufficient additional funding and time for implementation of the plan and ensure systematic evaluation of outcomes.

4. The Department of Education and school boards should develop and implement information and training sessions for parents regarding the special education policy, programming and services for students with special needs, and issues surrounding specific disabilities.

5. The Department of Education, school boards, NSTU, and faculties of education should design and implement an annual institute to provide opportunities for education professionals to share

and network effective/promising practices, materials, and resources. Involved in these sessions should be parents, advocacy groups, and other professionals to share their experiences.

Identification and Assessment

6. The Department of Education and school boards should review existing referral and assessment practices of school boards and develop uniform guidelines that
   - establish appropriate and timely referral and assessment practices
   - describe the ongoing link between assessment and instructional practices.

7. The Department of Education, university faculties of education, and school boards in consultation with teachers should collaborate to design, implement, and evaluate professional development opportunities for resource and classroom teachers, including institutes and courses on identification and assessment practices.

8. The Department of Education should set targets and provide financial support for appropriate numbers of qualified professionals in the school system to support the identification and assessment process. Geographic considerations should be incorporated into this process.

Program Planning

9. The Department of Education should establish a committee including the NSTU and school boards to review and recommend by November 1, 2001, ways to ensure that teachers have sufficient time available for program planning. The report of the committee should provide
   - options/effective practices to increase the time available to plan
   - clarification that 'contact time' includes time utilized for program planning
   - a communication/implementation plan

10. The Department of Education and school boards should develop and implement a guide for teachers, administrators, and professional support personnel, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of all involved in the program planning process.

Parental Involvement

11. The Department of Education, in consultation with the Special Education Programs and Services Committee (SEPS), should develop a guide for parents on the program planning process and the role of all partners in the process.

12. Each school board should develop and implement a strategy consistent with the guide to enhance meaningful parental involvement in the program planning process.

Interagency Collaboration

13. Government, through the Child and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC), should ensure interagency collaboration to enhance access to programs and services for children and youth with special needs. The following actions should be undertaken:
   - Revise and expand the handbook *Transition Planning in Nova Scotia* (1994). Transition procedures at school entry and school leaving should be outlined.
   - Develop collaborative practices with health professionals to ensure that recommendations made to schools are feasible and practical and consider the context of the school environment.

- Identify and address the gaps in support for children and youth with special needs. This should include implementation of the recommendations in the report "Mental Health: A Time for Action", Bland and Dufton, May 2000.
- Develop a mechanism for the provision of services and funding to support youth with disabilities aged 18-21 years old upon school leaving.

Resources and Supports

14. The Department of Education should define core services and desired service ratios (based on recognized professional standards) for professional staff at the school board and school levels.

15. The Department of Education should engage, on a short-term contract, a person with expertise and qualifications in the educational applications of assistive technology to design a framework for the acquisition, distribution, and provision of a full range of assistive technology devices and services for the P-12 school system.

16. The Department of Education and school boards should review and update the list of Authorized Learning Resources to facilitate access to appropriate multi-level resources are available for students and teachers in both English and French.

17. The Department of Education, in consultation with education partners, should develop programming guidelines and strategies to support students with behavioural challenges in the school system.

18. The Department of Education, through the Education Funding Committee, should address the issue of class size guidelines and related funding requirements.

Funding

19. The Department of Education should provide an immediate injection of $20 million in the 2002-03 fiscal year targeted to a base level of core services and appropriate service ratios.

20. Core services caseloads should be reviewed annually by the Special Education Programs and Services Committee to recommend appropriate service and funding levels to the Minister.

21. The Department of Education should cost the recommendations in the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC) report and include them in the funding plan in time for the next budget cycle. The plan will identify how the additional funding should be targeted to address needs in the following priority areas:
    - Professional development
    - Support for emotionally/behaviourally challenged students based on:
      I. following guidelines developed by the department in consultation with school boards, teachers, and parents and
      II. proposals submitted by school board reflecting effective practices
    - Learning resources for students with special needs including a designated amount to be accessed at the school level
    - Assistive technology
    - Teacher time for program planning and implementation

22. Additional funding should be included in the resource credit allocation for schools to reflect the need for additional learning resources for students with special needs.

Programming Standards and Accountability

23. School boards should monitor Individual Program Plans (IPPs) to ensure that the outcomes developed and implemented are appropriate and measurable. In addition, a consistent system should be developed to track, monitor, and report to parents student progress and achievement on outcomes stated in IPPs.

24. As recommended in the *Post-Shapiro Review of Teacher Education in Nova Scotia, Oct 2000*, the Minister should ensure there is a mechanism to monitor pre-service teacher education programs and propose policy changes. All teachers who successfully complete an approved program of initial teacher education and are certified to teach in Nova Scotia should have undertaken coursework that addresses programming in special education and practica within inclusive settings that involves working with a diverse range of students who have special education needs.

25. Notwithstanding contractual agreements, the Department of Education should define or adopt, and school boards should adhere to, competencies and/or professional qualifications in hiring or assigning persons responsible for providing core special education services (e.g., resource teachers, speech language pathologists, school psychologists, student service coordinators).

26. School boards should ensure that each school implements "Tracking Our Progress" as part of their school improvement planning. School boards should submit an annual report on implementation to the Department of Education, which in turn will be shared with SEPS.

27. School boards should monitor resource teacher allocations in schools to ensure appropriate utilization of allocated staff and effective implementation of resource programs and services.

28. The Department of Education, in consultation with school boards, should identify core competencies for teacher assistants to be included in training programs for teacher assistants. These competencies should be required components in approved training programs.

29. School boards should develop short- and long-term plans for the provision of barrier-free access to, and within, educational facilities as mandated under Section 65(2)(e) of the Education Act and include updates on implementation of their plans as part of their annual report to the Minister of Education. The Department of Education should provide an annual update to be tabled each fall at a SEPS meeting regarding progress in both existing and new facilities in improving barrier-free access to public schools.

30. The department should table an annual report with SEP on progress in implementing the special education policy and the recommendations in this report and on the resources provided to school boards and schools to assist in implementation.

31. The Department of Education, in consultation with the current SEPS committee, should review the role, mandate, and membership of the SEPS in light of the additional responsibilities recommended by this report.

Appeal Process

32. The Department of Education, in collaboration with school boards, should provide professional development for board office and school administrators and student services personnel in mediation skills to increase their ability to ensure that disputes regarding IPPs are resolved in a manner that is timely and minimizes the necessity of using the formal appeal process.

33. The Department of Education, in collaboration with school boards, should adopt mandatory procedures for the school board level appeal process that ensure timely resolution, specific recommendations, and parent involvement in selection of the review panel (similar to those afforded in the provincial appeal process).

34. The Department of Education and school boards should develop an information package on the appeal process to be distributed to parents in situations where there is an unresolved dispute regarding IPP outcomes or placement. The package should include all relevant board and department information in a format that provides parents with clear direction throughout the appeal process.

Action To Date on the 34 Recommendations of the SEIRC Report

	Recommendation	Action to Date	Proposed Action
1	Communication Plan	▪ APEF Inclusive Schooling brochure drafted	Develop brochures as follows: Program Planning Process (2002-03), Appeal Process, Transition Planning (2003-04), Identification and Assessment (2003-04)
2	Common Terminology	▪ Discussions initiated with Student Services coordinators	Ongoing
3	Professional Development	▪ School Boards submitted plans based on provincial priorities ▪ Developed and implemented inclusive schooling module for administrators (summer 2002)	▪ Summer institutes ▪ Ongoing professional development
4	Information/Training for Parents	School Boards have developed parent brochures and information pamphlets	Guide on program planning (2003-04)
5	Annual Institutes	Summer institutes offered 2002	
6	Referral and Assessment Practices		Develop and implement guidelines (2004-05)
7	Professional Development Opportunities for Professional Staff	Established a Master's degree program in partnership with universities and school boards	▪ Continue to offer this program to teachers ▪ Supporting practicums
8	Identification and Assessment – Appropriate Numbers of Qualified Professionals	A total of $6.0 M additional targeted funding announced from 2003-06 to increase number of core professional service providers.	
9	Time for Program Planning	Department of Education and NSTU report completed, $500,000 in financial support	
10	Guide regarding Roles and Responsibilities (for staff)	*Supporting Student Success: Resource Programming and Services* completed November 2002	Develop guidelines for speech-language pathologists (2003-04), school psychology (2004-05)
11	Guide for Parents on Program Planning		Develop a new guide for parents on program planning (2003-04)
12	Enhanced Parent Involvement in Program Planning		Implementation of Guide at school board level in 2004-05
13	Interagency Collaboration	▪ Revision of *Transition Planning Handbook* in draft ▪ Re-established Provincial Transition Committee under CAYAC ▪ Draft transfer of Specialized Health Care Functions protocol completed ▪ EIIS brochure completed	▪ Implement Transition Plan ▪ Implement transfer of specialized health care functions protocol
14	Core Services Desired Service Ratios	See *Learning for Life*, p. 19	

Recommendation		Action to Date	Proposed Action
15	Assistive Technology Resources	Assistive Technology guidelines in development	$.05 M in 2003-04 $.30 M in 2004-05 $.30 in 2005-06
16	Authorized Learning Resources	▪ Committee to expand resource list established ▪ Extensive resources allocated to schools for grades 4-6 and 7-9 struggling readers (2002-03)	
17	Guidelines and Strategies for Students with Behavioural Challenges	▪ APEF draft on behaviour strategies developed ▪ Code of Conduct Guidelines in progress ▪ Four behaviour intervention pilots underway ▪ Cooperative Discipline training for leaders in each board (summer 2002) ▪ Comprehensive Guidance and Counselling training in spring 2003	In-service guides
18	Class Size Guidelines	See *Learning for Life*, p. 7	
19	Core Services and Appropriate Service Ratios	See Targeted Core Professional Services, *Learning for Life*, p. 19	
20	Core Services Caseload	See Targeted Core Professional Services, *Learning for Life*, p. 19	
21	Costing Recommendations	Draft completed. To be discussed with Special Education Programs & Services committee	
22	Increase Authorized Resource Credit Allocation	$100,000 identified in 2002-03 focused on literacy	
23	Monitoring of individual program plans (IPPs)	Template developed for reporting on individual program plans for provincial report card, piloting in 2002-03	Implementation of report card (2003-04)
24	Monitoring Pre-Service Teacher Education Programs	Identified gaps in pre-service and APEF discussing this with universities	
25	Competencies and/or Professional Qualifications	Competencies for Resource Teachers Developed	Develop guidelines for speech-language pathologists (2003-04), school psychology (2004-05)
26	Tracking Our Progress	Redeveloping Tracking Our Progress to ensure connection to additional funding and accountability (2002-03)	Incorporation of reporting on student services in annual business planning and school accreditation pilots (2003-04)
27	Monitoring Resource Teacher Allocation	Annual Student Services Provincial Survey used to monitor	
28	Core Competencies for Teacher Assistants	Draft of competencies developed	Develop and implement in-service modules based on identified needs

Recommendation		Action to Date	Proposed Action
29	Barrier-Free Access	Standards currently in Education Act – Section 64(2)(e)	Require as part of annual business plan (2003-04)
30	Annual Reports on Special Education Policy Implementation		Annual report to be tabled with SEPS starting in 2003
31	Review of SEPS Mandate/Membership	Draft mandate – membership document prepared and submitted to SEPS	
32	Professional Development in Mediation Skills for School Board Staff		Mediation Skills Workshop, Summer institute, 2003
33	Mandatory Appeal Procedures – school board level		School Board and Ministerial Guidelines will be updated
34	Information Package on Appeal Process		Boards to develop (2003-04)

Halifax Regional School Board

SPECIAL EDUCATION
POLICY

POLICY CONTENTS

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3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES
4.0 SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL
5.0 PROGRAM PLANNING
6.0 COLLABORATION
7.0 STUDENT PLACEMENT
8.0 TRANSPORTATION
9.0 COMMUNICATION
10.0 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
11.0 APPEALS
12.0 AUTHORIZATION

1.0 DEFINITIONS

1.1 Students with special needs are those whose needs are such that they require supports in addition to those provided by a classroom teacher.

2.0 EDUCATIONAL FUNDING

2.1 In addition to general formula funding, the Department of Education provides a grant to each school board to assist with the costs of programming and services for students with special needs (provincial Special Education Policy 1.3).

2.1.1 The provincial Special Education Policy outlines students for whom special education funding may be used as those students having any of the following exceptionalities:

- cognitive impairments
- emotional impairments
- learning disabilities
- physical disabilities and/or other health impairments
- speech impairments and/or communication disorders
- sensory impairments – vision, hearing
- multiple disabilities
- giftedness

3.0 GENERAL PRINCIPLES

3.1 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to providing an appropriate education for all students by responding to their unique needs on an individual basis through the provision of a range of organizational and instructional options to enhance opportunities and the provision of continuity in programming for all students.

3.2 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to quality education for all students through the provision of qualified teachers who are responsible for ensuring that the objectives of the program match, as much as possible, student strengths and needs.

3.3 The Halifax Regional School Board endorses the value of inclusive schooling. In accordance with the Education Act 64(2)(d), the Halifax Regional School Board is committed to "developing and implementing educational programs for students with special needs within the regular instructional settings with their peers in age in accordance with the regulations and the Minister's policies and guidelines".

4.0 SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

4.1 Services will be delivered through a clearly articulated, equitable model reflected in the planning framework and responsive to the needs identified through regional, area, family, school and individual program planning.

5.0 PROGRAM PLANNING

5.1 The Halifax Regional School Board endorses a process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation as outlined in the provincial Special Education Policy.

5.2 Each principal is responsible for ensuring that there is a collaborative structure in place (School Planning Team or SPT) for decision-making regarding the use of allocated school-based resources and services and to facilitate the development and implementation of individual program plans.

5.3 The Halifax Regional School Board will provide qualified personnel to assist schools in the identification of students with special needs through assessment and evaluation.

5.3.1 When formal assessment is deemed necessary by a School Planning Team, informed written consent from a parent/guardian is required prior to the assessment.

5.4 In accordance with the Department of Education Special Education policy 2.6, "an individual program plan (IPP), based on the student's strengths and needs will be developed and implemented at the school level for every student for whom the provincial curriculum outcomes are not applicable and/or attainable".

5.4.1 Transition planning is part of the individual planning process for each student with special needs.

6.0 COLLABORATION

6.1 The Halifax Regional School Board will ensure that the individual program planning process is collaborative in meeting student needs. In addition to appropriate staff, parents/guardians will be included at all stages of the planning process.

6.2 The Halifax Regional School Board is committed to working collaboratively with external agencies in program planning for students with special needs.

7.0 STUDENT PLACEMENT

7.1 Programming options shall be carefully considered for each individual student. In situations where a student with special needs requires a setting or services not available at their home school, the School Planning Team may initiate a referral for an alternative placement.

7.2 All placements in classes outside a student's home school are considered temporary.

7.3 Placements will be reviewed annually or more often as needed.

8.0 TRANSPORTATION

8.1 Any student having a physical or cognitive disability requiring special transportation shall be conveyed from home to school at the Board's cost, irrespective of distance.

9.0 COMMUNICATION

9.1 The Halifax Regional School Board will provide schools, parents/guardians, and the public with clear information about the range of services and costs associated with the provision of support for students with special needs.

10.0 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

10.1 The Halifax Regional School Board will support professional development opportunities for staff focused on meeting the needs of all students.

11.0 APPEALS

11.1 In cases where a parent/guardian of a child with special needs does not agree with the outcomes and/or placement indicated on the individual program plan, they may request an appeal as outlined in the School Board and Ministerial Appeal Guide, February 1999.

12.0 AUTHORIZATION

12.1 The Superintendent is authorized to develop and issue procedures in support of this policy.

Halifax Regional School Board

SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROCEDURES

PROCEDURES CONTENTS

1.0 SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL
2.0 PROGRAM PLANNING
3.0 STUDENT PLACEMENT
4.0 TUITION AGREEMENTS
5.0 COMMUNICATION
6.0 APPEALS
7.0 TRANSPORTATION

1.0 SERVICE DELIVERY MODEL

1.1 In order to ensure that student services are provided in an equitable manner, the Board will establish leadership and planning structures at several levels.

- 1.1.1 regional
- 1.1.2 area
- 1.1.3 family
- 1.1.4 school

1.2 Through these structures, designated staff at each level will make informed decisions regarding the use of resources allocated to that level.

1.3 The specific responsibilities of each of these teams are outlined in the Leadership and Planning Framework for Student Services (Appendix 1).

1.4 Each year as part of budget planning the Regional Planning Team will make recommendations regarding System Standards for resources funded through the Board global budget. Depending upon the needs identified within schools and families, these services may change from year to year.

1.5 Enhanced services will be provided, pursuant to the Supplementary Funding Policy, at the area, family and school levels. Decisions regarding the allocation of these resources will be made through the Leadership and Planning Framework for Student Services.

2.0 PROGRAM PLANNING

2.1 In each school, the principal shall be responsible for establishing a School Planning Team (SPT).

2.2 In each family, the lead principal shall be responsible for establishing a family of schools planning team (FOSPT).

2.3 In each area, the supervisor of student services shall be responsible for establishing an area planning team (APT).

2.4 At the regional level, the regional supervisor of student services shall be responsible for establishing a Regional Planning Team (RPT).

3.0 STUDENT PLACEMENT

3.1 When a School Planning Team determines that a student should be considered for placement in a special program outside their home school, the procedures for Special Class Placement, Creating Schools Populations Policy, will apply.

4.0 GUIDELINES REGARDING THE PROVISION OF SERVICES AND BENEFITS FROM EXTERNAL SOURCES

4.1 The School Board may enter into agreements for the provision of external services and benefits for students. When the agreement is for a tuition agreement the private school must teach the provincial curriculum and the program offered must be acceptable to the School Board. Prior to consideration of such a request the following criteria must be met:

4.1.1 The process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs as outlined in Policy 2.2 of the Provincial Special Education Policy Manual and the Board's policy have been followed.
4.1.2 The Board has explored all opportunities to realign, reallocate or change the delivery of services within the School Board to meet the needs of the student.

4.2 The parent/guardian submits to the office of the area Assistant Superintendent, in writing, a request for consideration of a tuition agreement for their son/daughter.

4.3 The request is reviewed by the Area Planning Team within thirty (30) working days of the request.

4.4 The parent/guardian will be notified of the decision of the Area Planning Team, in writing.

4.5 Only services provided through the Halifax Regional School Board shall be provided on school property during the regular school day.

5.0 COMMUNICATION

5.1 An information website related to student services will be developed by Regional Student Services staff and maintained with the support of the Communications Department of the Board.

5.2 Each school shall prepare and distribute a brochure describing the student services available at their site using a template developed by the Regional Student Services Supervisor in consultation with the Communication Department of the Board.

6.0 SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL EDUCATION APPEALS

6.1 In a case where a member of the program planning team does not agree with the outcomes and/or placement indicated in the individual program plan, a School Board Special Education Appeal may be initiated.

6.2 A letter to the office of the appropriate Area Assistant Superintendent of the Halifax Regional School Board is written to request a School Board Special Education Appeal. This should occur within thirty (30) working days of the date of the establishment or review of the IPP.

6.3 Upon receipt of a request for an appeal, the Department of Education *School Board and Ministerial Appeal Guide* and relevant School Board policies and procedures will be forwarded to the parent/guardians requesting the appeal within ten (10) working days.

6.4 The request will be reviewed to determine if the program planning process has been followed and if the appeal is based on the outcomes and/or placement as indicated in the IPP.

6.5 If the decision is to refer back to program planning this information is communicated to all appropriate parties.

6.6 If the decision is to grant the appeal and the request is received by June 21, a date will be established within forty (40) workings days and the date, time and location of the appeal will be distributed to all appropriate parties.

6.7 Requests received at the office of the Assistant Superintendent on or before June 21 will be heard before July 15, if granted. Requests received after that date will be heard on or before September 15.

6.8 A School Board appeal committee, set by the Board, hears and decides the appeal. This committee consists of an Assistant Superintendent, a school principal and an individual, not employed by the HRSB, with educational experience and expertise. All appropriate parties will be notified of the appeal decision within ten (10) working days of the appeal.

7.0 TRANSPORTATION

7.1 In accordance with the Education Act and Regulations (June 1997) and Board Policy, any student requiring transportation because of special needs shall be conveyed from home to school at the Board's cost, irrespective of distance.

7.2 School principals will provide information to the Operations Department as to those students affected. Assistant Superintendents will provide guidance as necessary.

Halifax Regional School Board

PROTOCOL FOR PLACEMENT OF STUDENTS HOUSED IN RESIDENTIAL FACILITIES

(Revised September 7, 2003)

The Halifax Regional School Board recognizes the need for students under the care of residential facilities to attend community-based school programs. All reasonable efforts will be made to facilitate a successful transition and to accommodate each student's educational requirements. To facilitate the registration for resident students, the following procedures are recommended:

1. The Board acknowledges that the preferred option for children/youth residing in residential facilities is to attend the school that serves the neighbourhood in which he/she legally resides. Legal residence is defined as the residence of the student's parents or if the student has a legal guardian appointed, pursuant to an Order of the Court or by operation of law, then the residence of such guardian.

2. In cases where transportation costs make this option prohibitive, or in the event that the student must be accommodated in a neighbourhood school in proximity to the residential facility, the residential facilities staff is responsible for approaching the Principal of the school to facilitate the registration and transition process. At the time of registration, the supervisor or mutually agreed upon designate of the residential facility will assume the role of primary contact for the resident to ensure consistent communication. This process should be concluded in a maximum of ten school days. Difficulties with this process should be reported by the Principal to the School Administration Supervisor to ensure a timely placement of the resident.

3. Programming options shall be carefully considered for each individual student. In situations where a student requires a setting or services not available at the neighbourhood school, the School Planning Team may initiate a referral for an alternate placement. The Principal is responsible to refer the placement concerns to the respective School Administration Supervisor for consultation. The Supervisor is best prepared to consider available resources, demographics and community factors that will impact on the success of the transition and to determine if the support of the Student Services Facilitator is required. This process should be concluded in a maximum of ten school days. At the point of registration, the supervisor or designate of the residential facility will assume the role of primary contact for the resident to ensure consistent communication. The supervisor or designate will assume specific responsibilities indicated in the IPP of the resident (if required) to ensure accountability and responsibility in implementing the plan.

4. All placements in classes outside a student's neighbourhood school are considered temporary. Placements will be reviewed as part of the Program Planning Process. In addition, if the student is no longer under the care of the residential facility, the student will be required to transfer to the school that serves the neighbourhood in which he/she legally resides.

Appendix 7

Guidelines Regarding
Tuition Agreements for Students with Special Needs

The Education Act, Section 64(3)(c} states:

A school board may enter into agreements, including tuition agreements, for the provision of services and benefits.

Recently, school boards have asked the Department of Education and Culture for guidance on parameters for the content of tuition agreements to purchase services from (or place students in) private schools for students with special needs. The following criteria are suggested as guidelines for boards considering agreements with private schools to support individual placements for students with special needs:

(1) ***The process of identification, assessment, program planning and evaluation for students with special needs as outlined in Policy 2.2 of the Special Education Policy Manual and in the board's policy has been followed;***

(2) The board has explored all opportunities to realign, reallocate or change the delivery of services within the school board to meet the needs of the student;

(3) The program planning team, of which the student's parents are members, and the school board staff have determined that the student's needs for learning cannot be met within the board's system;

(4) If all of the first three criteria are met, the school board may enter into a tuition agreement with a private school which teaches the provincial curriculum and whose program is acceptable to the school board. If the tuition agreement is for a student in high school, the program must be approved by the Department of Education and Culture;

(5) A student placed in a school outside the board's system in accordance with the preceding guidelines must first be registered with his/her local school. The student will be counted for formula funding purposes and the board will continue to have responsibility for reviewing and evaluating the student's progress throughout the school year;

(6) The school board may extend the tuition agreement beyond the initial year if the program planning team, the school board and the parents agree that continuation of the placement is still necessary;

(7) School boards should develop a policy on purchasing out educational services which incorporates the preceding guidelines based on their particular circumstances.

The preceding guidelines assist school boards in identifying options for disbursing funds to best meet the requirements of students with special needs. It should be noted that only the school board receives formula funding and no other person or organization has legal entitlement to these funds.

Source: Department of Education and Culture

Amended August 20, 1997

Glossary of Terms

APEF
Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation.

APSEA
Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority.

ASD
Autistic Spectrum Disorder.

CASLPA
Canadian Association of Speech Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

CAYAC
Children and Youth Action Committee. A group of senior officials from the Nova Scotia Departments of Education, Justice, Health, and Community Services, the NS Sport and Recreation Commission and the NS Youth Secretariat. CAYAC promotes co-coordinated policy development and comprehensive service delivery to achieve better outcomes for children and youth in the province. CAYAC promotes and facilitates interdepartmental initiatives at the provincial and regional level.

CDST
Child Development Support Team, a board-based behaviour program.

CUPE
Canadian Union of Public Employees.

EIIS
Early Identification and Intervention Services. An interdepartmental project through the Children and Youth Action Committee (CAYAC) that includes the departments of Health, Education, Community Services and Justice, as well as Recreation and some community partners. (See CAYAC.)

EPA
Educational Program Assistant.

FTE
Full-time equivalent staffing.

FOSPT
Family-of-schools planning team.

GF
General Fund. Sometimes referred to as Global Funding.

HRSB
Halifax Regional School Board.

IPP
Individual Program Plan.

JH
Junior High School, encompassing Grades 7 to 9.

LC
Learning Centre. (Also see Specialized Learning Centre.)

NSTU
Nova Scotia Teachers Union.

QEHS
Queen Elizabeth High School.

SEIRC
Special Education Implementation Review Committee. (See SEPS. Also see Appendix 3.)

SEPS
Special Education Programs and Services Committee. A group representing several departments of the provincial government, including Health, Community Services and Education, as well as significant representation from groups representing students with special needs. The Halifax Regional School Board Coordinator of Programs and Student Services currently represents the Coordinators of Student Services across the province on this committee. The SEPS committee was instrumental in the Special Education Implementation Review Committee (SEIRC), and will continue to be involved in the implementation of the recommendations. (Also see SEIRC.)

SH
Senior High School, encompassing Grades 10 to 12.

SLP
Speech Language Pathologist.

Specialized Learning Centre
A learning centre that is funded entirely through supplementary funding. These were formerly referred to as "special classes" or "congregated classes." The students are often multi-challenged, requiring a very high level of care.

STARS
Success Targets Aimed at Returning Students. A pilot project at Queen Elizabeth High School, funded for 2003-04 through the Department of Education's *Learning for Life* initiative.

TEACCH
Treatment and Education of Autistic and related Communication-handicapped Children. An individualized assessment and treatment program developed at the University of North Carolina for children with autism and communication handicaps.

ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS ON VIOLENCE AND DRUGS

In the Superintendent's Annual Report for the 2003-2004 we reported on the following board-level Safe Schools initiatives:

BOARD-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

Supporting Students

- Partnered with the Crime Prevention Society of Nova Scotia, Police Services, and Sobeys to produce anti-bullying calendars that were distributed to all Grade 5 students
- Implemented the Options To Anger Program™ to help secondary students on suspension before they returned to school
- Applied for and received funding from Theatre Nova Scotia's Perform (artists in schools) program. High schools will receive 18 hours of instruction time, helping each school to create and perform a live play on student relationships and anti-bullying for junior high schools.
- Hosted the Halifax Regional Skills Competition for elementary and junior high students, with a theme of bully awareness
- Partnered with the Saint Mary's University football team and received free tickets to all home games next year. The tickets will be given to students to recognize pro-social behaviour.
- Held 45 workshops for students on the topic of bullying.

Providing Professional Development

- Delivered training to teachers in non-violent crisis intervention, the Lion's Quest™ social skills program, and peer mediation
- Trained junior high Guidance teachers in the Options to Anger™ program
- Held several school training sessions on strategies for developing a positive school climate
- Provided a variety of books to schools on bullying and student relationships.

Building Public Awareness

- Launched a public anti-bullying campaign in partnership with Metro Transit
- Began implementation of workshops with School Advisory Councils on the Nova Scotia Code of Conduct for Schools
- Delivered nine workshops to parents on the topic of bullying
- Distributed parent brochures on bullying to all schools.

SCHOOL-LEVEL ACTIVITIES

This month we also surveyed schools to collect information on the types of safe and healthy schools initiatives that they have implemented. It was very clear from school's responses that these initiatives have become an integral part of their programming. Survey results also show that schools and community agencies are forming strong partnerships to meet the needs of students in these areas. In addition to the many examples of partnerships listed below, schools frequently described how they have instituted regular meetings with key groups such as police services and public health. Many respondents also described the procedures that are in place to address emergent issues in a timely manner with involvement of students, staff and parents.

The range of prevention and intervention activities currently in place in HRSB's schools to address violence and drug-use issues include,

- Peer Mediation Programs
- Lions Quest Program
- Second Step Program
- RCMP Dare Program
- Bully Smart Programs
- Pal Radio
- Circle of Friends
- Moments of Kindness
- Comprehensive Guidance Program
- League of Peaceful Schools activities
- RISKWATCH which is actually an injury prevention program but focuses on the areas of Motor Vehicle safety, Fire and Bum Prevention, Firearms Injury Prevention, Bike and Pedestrian safety, and Water safety.
- Clear Implementation of Code of Conduct
- Close liaison with School Police Liaison Officers
- Offerings of Extensive Extra Curricular Programs
- Youth Health Centre and the Public Health Nurse does do individual sessions on Anger Management
- Grade 12 Drama students wrote and presented anti-bullying and smoking cessation skits to HRSB junior high schools
- Participation in Art Against Youth Violence Contest
- Partnerships between RCMP liaison officers and youth health center staff on delivery of school-wide drug awareness programs.
- One school identified an issue among students in a particular grade and instituted a noon hour club for this grade to discuss issues related to bullying and other topics, with involvement of the school's Public Health Nurse.
- Participation in Mainland North Anti-Smoking Poster contest
- As a part of the Focus on Bullying Program, we have class representatives, called "Peace Talkers", who meet with the principal twice a month to discuss issues and come up with ideas for a more peaceful school.
- Student Patrol Teams, who help younger students outside during recess and lunch.
- All classes have a "Box" in which children can put in any problems or suggestions for anti-bullying. This box ensures children can make comments anonymously.
- Super Citizen Awards to promote positive social behaviours in and around the school
- High Five Assemblies /Peace and Friendship assemblies
- Games Squad Program to promote 'fair play' activities at recess time
- Social skills groups - ten-week program designed and implemented by Learning Centre teacher and school psychologist
- ASDH Drug Awareness Action Committee
- Resources such as *Violence Prevention Skills: Lessons and Activities; Social Skills: Lessons and Activities;* and *Student Assistance Program (Drug and Alcohol prevention and intervention)*

- Scheduled guidance classes for all grade levels incorporate youth violence and drug awareness
- the 'Living Values Education Program' – promoting a different value each month (e.g. friendship, respect, responsibility, unity, honesty, acceptance, etc). Supported through classroom activities, a monthly assembly devoted to each value, and student contributions to a new bulletin board each month.
- Every month, there is a different value promoted such as friendship, respect, responsibility, unity, honesty, acceptance, etc. We have a monthly assembly devoted to the monthly value, and students contribute to a new bulletin board each month. Our school psychologist offered a helpful and positive parent workshop on developing self-esteem in children.
- Parent workshops on developing self-esteem in children
- Options to Anger Program
- Annual school student Peace Education/Building Conference
- Community building activities i.e. Student Showcase, Drama Production
- Parent workshops
- HIP – Healthy Informed & Positive Program (Drug Intervention Program)
- The P.A.R.T.Y. (Preventing Alcohol Related Trauma in Youth)
- Culture of Peace Conference for all grade 7 students Multicultural Fair to promote diversity and acceptance of all cultures
- Smoke Free for Life Program
- Anti-Drug/Anti Smoking poster contests
- "Please Don't Drink and Drive" paper bag decorating
- Presentations to classes on Drug Awareness, Stranger Danger, and Bullying by HRM Police Liaison Officers.
- Presentation by Jason Dixon (Member of Junior Boys Team Canada World Hockey, Gold Medal, Champions) on goal setting, and how alcohol, and drugs are a barrier to young people meeting their goals.
- Presentations by members of the 'ESTEEM Team' about healthy and positive choices regarding tobacco use, as well as offering encouragement to students strive for their dreams
- Performance by STOPP - 'Student Triumph Over Peer Pressure' Dance Club - a performance and workshop of dance and drumming presented by students from North Albion Collegiate Institute in Etobicoke, Ontario.
- Multi-media presentations from Mothers Against Drunk Driving
- Presentation by St. Mary's Men's Football Team on anti-bullying
- All school assemblies at high schools with George Chuvalo on substance awareness, sponsored by Alexa McDonough.

Funding Models

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Differential Board Funding – Nova Scotia

Board	Enrolment	$ / Student	Difference	+ %
Conseil	4,059	$6,922	$1,761	34.1%
Strait	9,355	$6,611	$1,449	28.1%
Cape Breton	19,443	$5,854	$692	13.4%
Southwest	17,608	$5,678	$516	10.0%
Chignecto	25,061	$5,615	$454	8.8%
Annapolis	16,766	$5,496	$334	6.5%
Halifax	56,408	$5,162	$0	0.0%

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Differential Board Funding – Alberta

Board	Enrolment	$ / Student	Difference	+ %
Northland	2,959	$7,981	$2,083	35.3%
High Prairie	3,752	$6,986	$1,087	18.4%
Calgary	99,387	$5,899	0	0.0%

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Differential Board Funding – Ontario

Board	Enrolment	$ / Student	Difference	+ %
Keewatin - Patricia	7,696	$7,312	$1,354	22.7%
Hamilton	52,964	$7,205	$1,247	20.9%
Bluewater	23,926	$6,387	$430	7.2%
Durham	69,457	$5,958	$0	0.0%

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Differential Board Funding - Newfoundland

Board	Enrolment	$ / Student	Difference	+ %
Corner Brook	4,060	$7,184	$1,922	36.5%
Vista	4,225	$6,716	$1,454	27.6%
Avalon East	30,332	$5,262	0	0.0%

NOVA SCOTIA
Department of Education

Differential Board Funding – Prince Edward Island

Board	Enrolment	$ / Student	Difference	+ %
Western School Board	7,670	$5,980	$192	3.3%
Eastern School Board	15,173	$5,788	0	0.0%

EDUCATION POSITION PAPER

2003 Lead & Achieve Public Consultation Report

For

Nova Scotia School Boards

Reported by: Nancy Mosher
December 2003

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Executive Summary

In May 2003, representatives of Nova Scotia's eight school boards made a commitment to a provincewide action plan to address academic performance. Improving the quality of public education, greater accountability for improved academic performance, and ensuring measurable improvements to national rankings, became the key goals for school boards in the resulting "Lead & Achieve" Education Action Plan.

To obtain input from parents, students and education partners as to how best to achieve the goals of the plan, school boards across the province hosted a total of 30 public forums in fall 2003. Participants were asked for their opinions on three key issues related to the public education system – quality, measurement, and accountability. This report contains input collected through this process. Many consistent themes were expressed, and participants were very open with their comments on both the highs and lows of the current system.

QUALITY

A quality education was defined as one that meets the needs of all learners, reflects diversity, encourages partnerships, and is well-funded. A number of strengths within the school system were referenced, including dedicated school staff, professional development opportunities outside of the school day, and community support for local schools. Small class sizes (where they exist), fine arts program offerings, new school facilities, and upgrades to existing buildings were also mentioned. Inclusion was viewed as a positive experience for all learners, and the high level of student leadership within the schools was seen as positive.

Inadequate funding, lack of alternative programming, large class sizes, and a lack of collaborative services within government departments were among weaknesses mentioned. Participants expressed the need for communication at all levels to be improved, a greater focus on long term curriculum planning and more informative report cards. They also said teachers need more time to teach, must have the appropriate expertise for teaching assignments, and that a consistent method of teacher performance evaluation is required.

To improve the quality of our educational system within our fiscal reality, participants felt that school sites should have greater input into budget decisions, make more effective use of technology and better share schools' expertise and services. Other suggestions included adopting best practices from other jurisdictions, matching teacher skills with teaching assignments, and improved communication with parents and the community at large. Greater board-to-board sharing of information and resources, allowing a greater role for and more involvement by School Advisory Councils, and increasing the amount of time students, particularly those at the secondary level, spend in class were also seen to be important.

MEASUREMENT

National and international assessments were seen as a key way to measure the quality of education, but many factors – including a greater emphasis by students and teachers on preparation for national and international assessments – need to be considered. Provincial assessments were viewed as beneficial, but must reflect established curriculum outcomes and teachers must be accountable and consistent in their delivery of the curriculum. Participants indicated confidence in teachers' ability to assess student progress and asked that non-standard methods of measuring quality also be considered.

To improve student achievement and test results, participants feel that school boards, principals, teachers, students, parents, the Department of Education, and all other partners must demonstrate greater cooperation in delivering services. Improved communication, clearer roles and responsibilities, and teacher expertise and accountability were also viewed as key factors. The need to address the amount of learning time lost to things such as professional development and storm days was expressed, as were issues of funding and equity in staffing, resources and facilities, and the desire for School Advisory Councils to play a greater role.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Forum participants felt that each and every member of society has an important role to play in supporting student achievement. To ensure accountability in the education system, school board members must be more visible in the schools and classrooms, be advocates for students, and lobby the Department of Education, provincial government and municipal council for a greater share of funding. More effective use of communication tools and a greater role for School Advisory Councils were also deemed to be important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The main recommendations were based around the issues of funding, curriculum and assessment, and staff and services.

Acknowledgements

The NSSBA, on behalf of the school boards, wishes to thank consultant Nancy Mosher for her work on developing the Education Position Paper. The Association was pleased that someone with her education expertise was available to play a leadership role with writing the Paper. Also, the Association wishes to acknowledge the dedicated efforts of school board staff throughout the province who contributed their time and expertise to the 'Lead & Achieve' Education Action Plan.

Introduction and Background

In May of 2003 the school boards of Nova Scotia publicly announced their commitment to a provincewide action plan to address the academic performance of students within this province. The Nova Scotia School Boards Association (NSSBA) accepted the responsibility to coordinate this commitment on behalf of all school boards. Further, it was determined that this initiative was an "elected" school board member commitment.

This commitment came as a result of a number of contributing factors. First, in the fall of 2002 the school boards engaged Corporate Research Associates (CRA) to conduct both quantitative and qualitative research to gain better insight into Nova Scotians' attitudes towards the role of school boards in the province's education system, as well as, their general attitudes about public education. This research showed that Nova Scotians clearly identify their school board as the organization and group most involved in public education decision-making. This study is provided in Appendix I of this report. The 2002 research indicated Nova Scotians do not have great confidence in their public education system. CRA's research revealed that more than one-half of respondents (52%) rate the province's education system as fair or poor. While the majority of Nova Scotians (58%) believe public education in the province is at least as good as in other provinces, one-third (34%) of those surveyed feel the public education system is somewhat or much worse than in other provinces.

Secondly, also in 2002 there was a low ranking on national and provincial tests by Nova Scotia students which indicated a need for improvement and change within the province's educational system. To quote Ms. Mary Jess MacDonald, president, NSSBA, "We all know that the young people of this province are Nova Scotia's greatest resource. For some time now school boards have been hearing from parents, community groups, the business community, and others, that there are strong concerns regarding the ability of our students to compete in the global marketplace. In fact, over the past year a number of things have contributed to the public's concern regarding the academic performance of our students, including the national mathematics test scores and the AIMS (Atlantic Institute for Market Studies) report on high schools' performance. It is simply not acceptable that our children rank near the bottom of national testing results. Both formal research and anecdotal evidence shows that the public wants improved quality in the Province's education system, and that they are worried about an education system they feel is not competitive with the rest of Canada."

Out of these studies has come the school boards' "Lead & Achieve" initiative. In May 2003, Nova Scotia's eight school boards announced their plan to improve the quality of public education. School boards decided to provide leadership through a coordinated, formal action plan. The first step in the "Lead & Achieve" plan for school boards was to ask the members of their local communities for input. Nova Scotians throughout the province had an opportunity to share and discuss their views at local community forums. All the forums were advertised in both provincial and local newspapers and were open to the public. Dates, times and locations of these forums are listed in Appendix II. The "Lead & Achieve" initiative focussed on three key elements: quality, accountability and measurement. School boards pledged:

1. to improve the quality of public education
2. to be accountable for improved academic performance of Nova Scotia students
3. to ensure that Nova Scotia student ranking at the national level will get measurably better

The public forums were conducted by each of the school boards. The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) reported they had just completed extensive public consultation prior to the announcement of the public forums. Parents and community members of the CSAP board were invited to attend any public forum held throughout the province. Each public forum was held in the evening to ensure that the optimum number of people could attend. A consistent format and agenda was followed at each meeting. Participants were led by a facilitator to give their input on set questions addressing the three key areas identified in the research: quality, accountability and measurement. As well, participants were free to bring forward other questions and issues. Questions and meeting agenda can be found in Appendix III.

Each of the public forums had an official recorder who had the responsibility to ensure that all input, advice and opinions given by the public, either verbally or in written submissions, were accurately recorded. Each of the member boards compiled these responses from the public forums and these submissions form the basis of this position paper.

The Public Forums

The public forums were held throughout the months of September and October 2003. Each of the member boards held four to five separate forums at different geographic locations throughout their regions and districts. This was to ensure accessibility for all. Each forum had a consistent agenda and questions to be responded to by the members of the public. (Appendix III) Each of these meetings was publicly advertised in provincial and local newspapers. Individual boards used a variety of strategies to further inform and invite the public to attend these forums, these included, local radio announcements, posters, individual invitations to municipal and provincial officials, school newsletters, and take-home notices. In addition, information on the plan had been shared with several partners, including Department of Education representatives, representatives from political parties, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Association of Nova Scotia Educational Administrators, the Nova Scotia Educational Leadership Consortium, the Nova Scotia Federation of Home and School Associations, and la Fédération des parents acadiens de la Novelle-Écosse.

At the thirty (30) public forums held throughout the province there were over 1,000 participants. They represented parents, grandparents, community members, teachers, students, school principals, senior board staff, local public officials, executive NSTU staff, MLA's, municipal counsellors, members of School Advisory Councils and other parent/school organizations, as well as, special interest groups. Where local board members attended, their role was one of observer, rather than participant.

Through ground rules laid out at the beginning of each of the forums (Appendix III) the discussion, input and contributions given were open and varied. No criticism of any response was allowed and all input was recorded. Those participants who attended the forums contributed valuable responses, opinions and feedback. It was clear that attendees were interested and intent on sharing their views.

Each board hosted and conducted their own public forums and undertook the responsibility to facilitate and record the information generated. In addition to this, the staff of NSSBA and the consultant engaged by the NSSBA, attended a number of the forums held throughout the province. Based on the above structure established to solicit the publics' responses, the NSSBA was assured that the information was gathered according to a standard format and reflected a good cross section of the views and values held by Nova Scotians on their public school system.

The Public Response

During the months of September and October the local school boards held public consultation sessions within their communities.

Using the same format and consistent questions, public responses were solicited and recorded by the individual boards. An examination of these responses showed that throughout the province there were many consistent themes and responses brought forward by both the public and staff who participated. A detailed summary of the information gained through the Lead & Achieve initiative provides important information and feedback for each of the eight school boards and to the directors of the provincial Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

SECTION I - QUALITY

Question 1: **"How do you Define Quality Education?"**

Response 1:

A quality education is one that provides for and meets the needs of all learners. It is well funded and resourced with both materials and a highly qualified staff who teach only in their field of expertise. Quality education is challenging, with clearly set and communicated goals at each grade level. These goals are understood by the learner, the parents and all school staff. Learners are stimulated and have pride in their achievements. Learners can apply the skills and knowledge they gain to their life outside the classrooms.

A quality education ensures success for each and every student by being diversified enough to meet the learning styles, needs and strengths of all. It provides well developed and varied programs delivered by highly trained teachers so that each learner develops a sense of pride in their individual accomplishments and achievements, regardless if they are academic, vocational, technological or arts oriented.

A quality education ensures that by the end of Grade 12, students have a solid foundation, and possess the skills and knowledge to choose a successful career path. A quality education can be evaluated and identified by tracking up to a five (5) year period the success of its graduates at their post high school choices. A quality education reflects cultural diversity to all and provides links to the heritages of the students and the community it serves.

A quality education is well funded and valued by the government and all agencies of society. It ensures equity so that no disadvantages due to geographic location, size of the school or the class, composition of the class, individual needs of students, or expertise of designated staff is allowed to exist, but rather, carefully evaluated and fully addressed.

In providing a quality education, it was clearly recognized in every public forum held, that all government departments and agencies must be directly involved and provide services at the public school level through a partnership model. Only through these directed partnerships, directed funding and directed services can a quality education be ensured for all learners. Partnerships with the greater community and business were also seen as essential to the delivery of a quality education.

Question 2: **"What are our schools' strengths and weaknesses?"**

Response 2:

This question generated much discussion in all of the public forums. It is important in some areas to note that items would be recognized as a strength, while in another area, they would be listed as a weakness. The following reflect the consensus of qualities that was declared by the public as either a strength or a weakness of their school's educational system.

Strengths:

- School Staff
- Professional Development Opportunities
- Community Support
- Small Class Size
- Fine Arts
- New Facilities and Upgrades
- Students
- Inclusion

School Staff

Consistently school staffs were identified. Their professionalism, commitment and dedication were recognized, particularly those staff members who go beyond the norm to provide extra services to their students whether in academic areas or extra-curricular activities.

Professional Development Opportunities

There was a valuing of professional development opportunities for staff held by boards outside of the school day. Staff members themselves valued some of the current implementation practices which stressed building professional networks and leadership teams. The broadening of the Reading Recovery Program and overall development of greater professional expertise were also continuously identified.

Community Support

Community support for the local schools, parental involvement and volunteerism were also clearly recognized as strengths. In addition, parent-teacher organizations, and the efforts of School Advisory Councils, particularly when engaged in effective school improvement/success planning, were constantly identified.

Small Class Size

Where small class sizes existed they were felt to be beneficial to the learning experiences of all students. These included special needs, behaviorally challenged, high achievers or regular school population.

Fine Arts

The emphasis on fine arts in those schools able to provide a variety of course offerings in this field, as well as the overall ability of some high schools to offer more diverse course offerings was believed by parents, staff and community members to be an advantage.

New Facilities and Upgrades

New school facilities and upgrades to existing buildings were seen as having positive effects on student learning with improved opportunities in technology, libraries, gymnasiums, among other things.

Students

Students themselves were definitely seen as strengths to the education system. The high level of student leadership found in our schools excelled in so many instances, particularly when viewed with the numerous activities our leading students are involved in: student government, athletics, music, drama, various extra-curricular clubs, volunteerism, community services, peer mediation and tutoring, as well as for many, part-time jobs.

Inclusion

Inclusion was seen as a strength for special needs students and a positive learning experience for all in developing understanding of differences and acceptance of others.

Weaknesses:

- Inadequate Funding
- Lack of Alternative Programming
- Class Size
- Lack of Collaborative Services
- Communication
- Curriculum Planning
- Report Cards
- Time
- Staff Expertise / Inconsistent Performance Evaluation

Inadequate Funding

A major weakness clearly stated in every forum held focussed on the amount of inadequate funding available to both school boards and school sites. The equity of funding was a major issue, with no factoring based on needs, geographic location, or special circumstances, only enrolment. Across the province a common thread was the need for more resources and more staff with specialty expertise.

Lack of Alternative Programming

More programs and curriculum for reaching the diverse needs within the regular stream of students, not just the identified special needs students, was also a clear concern. The lack of vocational opportunities at secondary level was consistently brought forward.

Students being placed in grade levels for which they do not have the skills and knowledge base to be successful, was continuously identified as a problem with today's educational system. The lack of any alternatives, other than repeating a grade, was felt to be detrimental to all.

Class Size

The composition of today's classrooms was strongly believed to adversely affect all learners. Continuously it was heard that class size and composition were common threads of discord within the education system provincewide.

Lack of Collaborative Services

There is a lack of direct and school based services with clear goals and a team approach. This was identified as making any success for individual students and families difficult. Within this context, the need for more direct support from other government departments, Health, Community Services, Recreation and Justice, was declared essential if improvements for schools and students are to be gained.

Communication

Parents and staff articulated their sense of frustration in their attempts to communicate their concerns with both the school boards and the Department of Education. The issue of communication at all levels was listed continuously. The concern was brought forward that at the Department of Education level, directives are given without any knowledge of their impact on individual schools. School-based communications were also felt to need improvement from informal daily interactions between parents and staff, to the more formal processes, through letters and newsletters sent home.

Curriculum Planning

There was a view that some curriculum initiatives are politically driven and do not serve long term curriculum planning and goals. The number of curriculum initiatives, without allowing time for their full implementation, has heightened the dissatisfaction of both parents and staff.

Report Cards

Most of all, the lack of truly informative report cards was a common complaint. Parents felt they did not know what their children were expected to achieve at each grade level and where their children stood in regards to any criteria. In many instances parents felt disconnected and disempowered within the child's school.

Time

Across the province it was recognized by all participants that time was an issue. There are continuous and growing societal demands on classroom teachers for delivery of an understanding on a wide range of topics. This negatively infringes on the time to teach the present curriculum. Interruptions to class time and using school time for professional development days were identified as weaknesses by both parents and staff.

Staff Expertise / Inconsistent Performance Evaluation

In conjunction with this was raised a concern for teacher expertise in the delivery of curriculum, as well as, no consistent provincewide criteria related to the performance evaluation for staff.

Question 3: **"What can we do to improve the quality of our educational system within the fiscal realities of our province?"**

Response 3:

At each forum this question posed a clear and definite reaction that more funding was needed for education throughout the province. Frustration was evident on the part of community members, parents, and staff over the funding of the education system based primarily on enrolment.

The need for the school site to have greater input into budget decisions based on their individual needs, resources and staffing expertise was continuously discussed. It was felt that both school boards and provincial government personnel needed a greater understanding of the impact made by budget decisions on individual schools, and thus the achievement of the students within those schools.

Similarly the realities of need, rather than enrolment, must drive budget decisions, not only at the school board level, but at the Department of Education and the provincial legislature. Evidence and research are clear that addressing the developmental needs and problems of students early is less costly than the present fragmentation of services.

In addition, more effective use of technology to provide services to rural areas, to provide remediation, to provide enrichment opportunities for students, to support individual learning styles and needs, and for delivering professional development to teachers on the programs they teach, was articulated. Government endeavors have placed technology into the schools and now is the time to begin using this to address the many needs that have been identified.

Boards need to ensure that schools share expertise and services rather than be competitive. Also there is a need for greater board to board sharing. The need to adopt a model of cooperative planning and delivery coordinated through the Department of Education was put forward. With each board taking one area in which to develop expertise and provide service and programs to students, all students and schools across the province could gain and benefit. No one board should or could provide everything but rather be the lead board in implementing a particular service. Providing the best learning opportunities to all students regardless of where they attend school drove this discussion.

It was felt that many practices and programs need to be reviewed for their effectiveness and that boards and the province can learn from what other jurisdictions are doing successfully.

Teacher expertise needs to be enhanced by matching skills with assignments, by providing leaves to gain required skills and by hiring early the top Bachelor of Education graduates in order to ensure that these teachers stay within the province.

Improvement in communication was continuously mentioned with the emphasis on the system developing more meaningful and effective ways to reach parents and the community both as a group and individually. More opportunities for parents to gain an understanding of the curriculum goals and expectations was consistently brought forward as a need.

Increasing the role and responsibility of School Advisory Councils with greater involvement in the ownership and use of their schools was seen as a definite way to improve student achievement.

One recommendation primarily made by parents and community members was to increase the amount of time students, particularly at secondary schools, spend in class. With all the demands made by society on "learning time" it was clearly felt that from grade 7 to 12 increased daily time would be beneficial.

SECTION II - MEASUREMENT

(INTERNATIONAL, NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL)

Question 1: **"How do you measure quality education?"**

Response 1:

Participants across the province responded consistently to this question. Those who support national and international assessments believed it is important to know how our students and our curriculum compares to other provinces and countries. The topics raised regarding standardized testing included concerns for the lack of national standards and criteria on which to make valid comparisons; concerns for the composition of the group of students being tested in each location; and an overall concern for the attitude and willingness put forth by our students and teachers when our students are required to complete this type of evaluation.

Provincial assessments overall were felt to be beneficial in determining both program evaluation and individual student progress. However, all present expressed concern that the assessment must reflect the curriculum outcomes established.

Teachers must be consistent and accountable in their teaching and delivery of the curriculum so no student is penalized unfairly when assessed on provincial tests. This developed into discussion on the importance of having clearly defined grade level expectations and outcomes which are well communicated, to both the students and the parents. Parents want a concise and clear picture of where their individual child's progress is from one point in time to the next, and in comparison to the expected outcomes and goals at that grade level.

Overall participants expressed their confidence in the classroom teacher's ability to assess students' progress. There was a clear appreciation for the many attributes nurtured in classrooms that can not be objectively measured but are important to the overall development of each student. As well, non-standard methods of measuring a quality education were suggested. These could include: use of student and parent satisfaction surveys; the interest level and engagement of the student and their attitudes about their attendance at school; tracking of grade 12 graduates; as well as tracking students' success as they transition from one level and/or grade to the next were predominant ideas put forward.

Question 2: **"What can schools boards, principals, teachers, students, parents, Department of Education and all other partners do better to improve student achievement and test results?"**

Response 2:

It was strongly felt that in order to improve student achievement all partners listed have to stop being fragmented in their roles and delivery of services, and refocus on what is best for our students. Greater cooperation and less fault-finding were identified as important first steps.

Improved communication was recognized as important. Each partner must be clear about their role and their contributions and responsibilities for our students' success. Communications need to be open, clear and relevant. These need to be targeting each of the above named partners to ensure that as a community and as a province we all understand the goals of our education system. School Advisory Councils are the grassroots, community based voice for each school and family of schools, and should have a greater role as a connector for the school to both the school board and the Department of Education.

If all levels were "true" advocates for students then more funds would be directed to the school to support program delivery needs in both staffing and resources.

The importance of teacher expertise and accountability was consistently brought forward. A concern for lost time due to extra-curricular activities, storm days, class trips, and other lost teaching time was put forward. The loss of learning time due to professional development days was also clearly articulated. The public expects professional staff to improve or upgrade their skills outside of the regular school day.

Funding and equity in staffing, resources and facilities were constantly brought forward as areas needing to be addressed.

There was recognition of the many demands placed on schools to support community and society's initiatives. Either the community itself must take these on and provide after school activities, or the school day or year needs to change, to better reflect the many demands and needs of today's families and communities.

SECTION III - ACCOUNTABILITY

Question 1: **"Who should be accountable for student achievement?"**

Response 1:

There was unanimous response and agreement to this question. All participants strongly believed that the student, the parent, the classroom teachers, the principal, the administrative staff of the boards, the elected school board members, the staff of the Department of Education, the provincial government and federal governments, as well as all members of society, have important and fundamental roles to play.

Clearly the roles and responsibilities of students, parents, teachers and school boards as laid out in our present Education Act were confirmed and agreed with throughout the discussion on this question.

Question 2: **"How can school board members ensure that there is accountability in the education system?"**

Response 2:

There was a general consensus from parents and staff that they would like to see elected school board members, and all non-school based leadership staff, be more visible in schools and classrooms. This was felt to be important in providing all members a clearer understanding for the impact of their decisions on the school site, and a more realistic understanding of the demands placed on schools and classroom teachers today.

Clearly the role of advocate was also viewed as very important. Repeatedly, the expectation heard was that school board members should lobby the Department of Education, provincial government and the municipal councils for a greater share of funding. It was strongly stated that elected school board members must ensure that all resources are being put to the best use possible.

As well, board members were valued as the only elected advocates for schools, students, and parents. In this role participants would like to see greater use of more effective communication tools by the school board. A greater understanding of policies, and the roles and responsibilities of all education partners could be heightened and improved through newsletters, pamphlets, brochures, Web sites, local media and call-in lines. Conducting on-going public consultations, with informal agendas, as well as, holding regular board meetings in different locations throughout the system were suggestions brought forward.

Increasing the role and responsibility of School Advisory Councils and connecting each board member with a special representative group of School Advisory Councils would provide direct liaison with school communities. Using School Advisory Councils to host community discussion meetings on board topics and policies was seen as a way to provide valuable feedback. Requiring senior staff to report regularly on curriculum and school based plans, projects and activities in conjunction with School Improvement/Success Plans and system initiatives, was seen as a way to focus attention on student achievement at the board table.

Throughout the discussion there was an evident awareness and appreciation of the time and commitment given by elected school board members.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are a result of the views articulated at all of the public forums. Inclusive in these is the expectation that "best practices", both provincially and nationally would be investigated and applied. As well, utilization of the incredible expertise that presently exists within staff throughout our school boards will provide the initiative and leadership required to implement the recommendations. It is certainly believed, that through the implementation of these recommendations Nova Scotia's students will attain improved results in all types of assessment including school-based, provincial, national or international.

I. Funding

A. To ensure quality, education funding must be increased based on programs and services delivery. This model must ensure equity throughout the province.

II. Curriculum and Assessment

A. All curriculum and programs taught in this province should have clearly articulated outcomes and expectations for the learner. These outcomes should be grade or level specific.

B. Curriculum and programs must be provided to meet the diverse learning styles and needs of all students from the gifted to the special needs. The present expectation that classroom teachers can adequately adapt their curriculum to meet the complex needs of all learners in any individual classroom serves no one learner well enough. It is felt that this places tremendous stress and unrealistic demands on teachers and students.

C. Immediate priority must be given to developing additional programs at the grade 9 to 12 levels. These programs would provide students with hands-on, trade-related, skills development and experiences. Direct links with both the community colleges and apprentice programs must be established in conjunction with this program. Existing programs require enhancement and further development in order to ensure that students are prepared and have the skills required to function in society.

D. Curriculum initiatives must be part of a comprehensive long term plan. These must be based on solid and well articulated pedagogy and research. A process of ongoing monitoring, review, and evaluation must be part of all curriculum initiatives.

E. Curriculum initiatives must be fully resourced so that implementation has the necessary funding and time to ensure success, for example, professional development of staff to required expertise levels, and availability of support materials.

F. All assessments, whether classroom based or provincial, must reflect the clearly identified outcomes for each subject at each grade level. Teachers and students together need to understand and value the purpose of various assessment tools. It is important that an attitude that "strives for excellence" be instilled in all learners.

G. A system of tracking student success should be implemented both at the post-secondary levels and as students move from elementary to middle school and to high school. This would provide valuable information for individual schools, school boards and the Department of Education.

H. An option to grade retention and social passes needs to be immediately implemented. Many learners require more time to gain skills and would benefit from a "supplementary" year or program. This should be designed to provide remediation to an individual learner's specific needs. This could occur in small classes, one-on-one, or learning centre settings. Intense skill development should be a goal.

I. Report cards should be consistent throughout the province. Success in relationship to specific grade level outcomes, as well as, individual development, must both be clearly considered and stated in regards to student progress.

J. Class size restrictions should continue at all grade levels.

III. Staff and Services

A. Standards of expertise in a subject or grade level must be required before teacher assignments are filled.

B. Province-wide staff performance appraisals should be immediately implemented. Integral to this would be recognition of high caliber performance and an opportunity and expectation to improve skill levels.

C. Continuation of the teacher early hiring job fairs to ensure that the best qualified graduates are retained for the province's education system. A program of incentives (similar to those used for nurses and doctors) should be developed so that the expertise and qualifications needed are met.

D. Information regarding areas of expertise, special programs and services, and best practices throughout the province should be gathered and disseminated to each of the school boards. Plans could then be implemented to ensure that the benefits of these programs are guaranteed to all Nova Scotia students. This would reinforce a spirit of true sharing and true partnership.

E. An improved and expanded use of technology is immediately required. This would enhance and make available many programs, services, extended learning opportunities to both students and staff. Each board could cooperate by taking a lead in a pre-determined area or field of expertise.

F. Communication skills and strategies at all levels require immediate attention to educate each other about their role, responsibilities and meaning. Training opportunities should be provided to all teachers, administrators, board staff, elected school board members, as well as, staff of the Department of Education.

G. More direct contact time, time on task, between students and teachers will result in improved learning. The length of the school day and school year for students no longer reflects the expectations and norms of today's society. A complete review and implementation of alternatives which would provide more learning time for students should be undertaken.

H. The role of School Advisory Councils should be expanded with training provided for all members. Membership should be extended to include community based personnel from such services as Health, Recreation, Community Services and Justice. The relationship and expectations between School Advisory Councils and elected school boards and the ministry level should be clearly defined. This would ensure community input and community support for education within the province.

I Services to students from the Departments of Health, Community Services, Justice and Recreation, must be delivered in coordination with the local school. This must move beyond the present CAYAC (Children and Youth Action Committee) model.

J School boards should conduct public consultations periodically throughout each school year to gain public input and support.

Appendix I: Public Forums Schedule

School Board	Date	Time	Location
Annapolis Valley Regional School Board	September 23	7:00 pm	Pine Ridge Middle School
	September 25	7:00 pm	L.E. Shaw Elementary School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Windsor Elementary School
	October 9	7:00 pm	Bridgetown Regional High
Cape Breton-Victoria Regional School Board	September 23	7:00 pm	Glace Bay High School
	September 24	7:00 pm	Sydney Academy
	September 30	7:00 pm	Bras d' Or Elementary
	October 1	7:00 pm	Cabot High School
Chignecto-Central Regional School Board	September 16	7:00 pm	Nova Family Office
	September 23	7:00 pm	Chignecto-Central Central Office
	September 30	7:00 pm	Stellarton Middle School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Amherst Regional High School
Conseil scolaire acadien provincial	Public consultations have previously taken place		
*Halifax Regional School Board *Due to Hurricane Juan, Halifax Regional School Board re-scheduled their first public forum for Monday November 3 at 7:00 pm at Eastern Shore District High School	October 2	7:00 pm	Eastern Shore District High School
	October 9	7:00 pm	Cole Harbour District High School
	October 16	7:00 pm	Sir John A. MacDonald High School
	October 22	7:00 pm	Queen Elizabeth High School
	October 29	7:00 pm	Sackville High School
South Shore District School Board	October 6	7:00 pm	Chester Area Middle School
	October 6	7:00 pm	Liverpool Regional High School
	October 7	7:00 pm	Bayview Community School
	October 14	7:00 pm	Hebbville Academy
Strait District School Board	September 24	7:00 pm	Richmond Academy
	October 2	7:00 pm	St. Andrew Junior School
	October 6	7:00 pm	Strathspey Place
	October 4	7:00 pm	Chedabucto Place
Tri-County District School Board	September 22	7:00 pm	Hillcrest Academy
	September 29	7:00 pm	Drumlin Heights Consolidated
	October 6	7:00 pm	Digby Elementary
	October 21	7:00 pm	Digby Neck Consolidated
	October 27	7:00 pm	Maple Grove Education Centre

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

School Board
Public Forum
Agenda

1.	Welcome and Introduction	Board Chair
2.	Presentation on Role of the School Board Member and Lead & Achieve Initiative	Board Chair
3.	Explanation of Purpose and Format for Remainder of Meeting	Facilitator
4.	Response to Discussion: Three to Four Questions	Facilitator
5.	Wrap Up	Board Chair or Representative

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

Ground Rules

- Respect that everyone has something to contribute

- Do not judge the comments

- One person speaking at a time

- Respect the timeframes for questions so all questions are discussed

- Cell phones off or on vibrate

- No official break - stand, stretch, location of washrooms

- Commitment to the group to leave on time

- Other

Appendix II: Public Forums Agenda, Ground Rules and Questions

Questions for Public Forums

Quality

1. How do you define quality education?

2. What are our schools' strengths and weaknesses?

3. What can we do to improve the quality of our educational system within the fiscal realities of our province?

Measurability (International, National and Provincial)

1. How do we measure quality education?

2. What can elected school board members, administrators, principals, teachers, students, parents, the Department of Education, and all other partners, do better to improve student achievement?

Accountability

1. Who should be held accountable for student achievement?

2. How can elected school board members ensure there is accountability in the education system?

Appendix III: CRA Report

AN ACT TO INCORPORATE THE NOVA SCOTIA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

Bill No. 50 - Assented to the 28th day of June, A.D. 1974
Amended 1983 and 1986

BE IT ENACTED by the Governor and Assembly as follows:

1. This act may be cited as the *Nova Scotia School Boards Association Act*.

2. In this act, unless the context otherwise requires:
   a) "Association" means Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
   b) "Boards of Directors" means the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
   c) "Minister" means the Minister of Education; and,
   d) "Board" means a school board as defined in the *Education Act*.

3. (1) The Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act* is continued as a body corporate, subject to the provisions of this act.
   (2) The by-laws, members, association, officers, committees, locals, and executives of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act* existing immediately prior to this act shall continue in effect or in office until changed or replaced pursuant to this act.

4. The constitution of the Association shall consist of:
   a) the Memorandum of the Association of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association as incorporated under the *Societies Act*; and
   b) the by-laws of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

5. No member of the Association shall be liable for the debts or liabilities of the Association unless he shall have made himself personally liable therefor.

6. The objects of the Association are:
   a) to provide a forum for the exchange of views and information on matters of mutual interest among the boards holding membership in the Association;
   b) to provide a common voice for the member boards in presentations to the provincial government, Department of Education, royal commissions, and other authorities or organizations concerned with education; and,
   c) to cooperate with the provincial and municipal governments and with other organizations in the furtherance of education.

7. The Association shall have the power to do all things necessary or desirable for the attainment of its objects or incidental thereto including, but not so as to restrict the generality of the foregoing, power:
   a) to purchase, acquire, lease, and hold real and personal property and to sell, convey and lease, mortgage or transfer the same;
   b) to borrow money from any person or corporation and to give security for any money so borrowed on any of the real and personal property of the Association by way of mortgage or otherwise;
   c) to accept all gifts, legacies, or bequests which may be given to the Association;
   d) to expend any money of the Association; and,
   e) to fix membership fees and special assessments of members and to collect such fees and assessments.

8. Unless otherwise provided in this act or by the by-laws of the Association, the powers of the Association may be exercised by the Board of Directors.

9. (1) The Association may make by-laws not inconsistent with this act respecting:
   a) the management of the Association and its property;
   b) the officers, Board of Directors, and committees of the Association and their respective powers and duties;
   c) the payment of annual dues and special assessments by its members; and,
   d) all other matters necessary or conducive to the carrying out of its objects and the exercise of these powers.

   (2) Every by-law shall be passed by a vote of at least three-quarters of the members of the Association present at a meeting thereof, notice of the intention to propose such by-laws at such meeting having been given in writing by notice mailed prepaid at least sixty days before such meeting to each member of the Association at its last recorded address.

10. (1) Every board shall be a member of the Association unless it resigns therefrom by written notice addressed to the Association office and mailed by prepaid registered post.

   (2) The resignation of a board from the Association shall become effective on the last day of the fiscal year of the Association and the resignation shall be effective for a period of one fiscal year.

11. (1) The Minister may, from time to time, pay a grant to the Association in an amount determined by the Governor-in-Council.

May 25, 2001

NSSBA BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 INTRODUCTION AND INTERPRETATION.

(a) In accordance with Section 4 of An Act to Incorporate the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, assented to on the 28th day of June 1974, and as amended in 1983 and 1986, these by-laws together with the Memorandum of Association of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association under *The Societies Act* shall comprise the constitution of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

(b) In the by-laws of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association:

- (i) 'NSSBA' shall mean the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
- (ii) 'Board of Directors' shall mean the Board of Directors of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association;
- (iii) 'Executive Committee' shall mean the Officers of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.
- (iv) 'School Board' shall include the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial and each regional and district school board, as established by the *Education Act*.

(c) Except as otherwise stipulated, *Kerr and King, Procedures for Meetings and Organizations*. shall govern the conduct of business at all meetings of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 2 MEMBERSHIP

(a) Active membership shall be limited to all school boards established under provincial legislation and recognized by the Department of Education.

(b) **Honorary and Life Memberships**

- (i) Honorary membership in the NSSBA shall be granted to the Minister of Education. Other persons may, upon the recommendation of the Board of Directors, be made honorary members for a specified term or honorary life members of the NSSBA by resolution at an Annual General Meeting.
- (ii) Life membership shall be granted to each person who has been the President of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association upon retirement from Office.
- (iii) Honorary members, honorary life members, and life members may participate in Annual General Meetings without payment of registration fee, but otherwise at their own expense, and without voting privileges unless otherwise entitled by virtue of holding some other Office or type of membership.

2 (c) **Associate Membership**

(i) School board superintendents, directors or equivalents, communications officers and board secretaries who are table officers of their boards are automatically associate members through their boards' membership in the NSSBA, with membership dues considered paid as part of their respective board's annual membership fee.

(ii) Associate membership shall be accorded to other interested individuals and organizations by appointment of the Board of Directors and on payment of a fee set annually by the Board of Directors.

(iii) Associate members may attend the Annual and Special General Meetings at their own expense, if duly registered, but shall have no voting privileges.

(d) **Affiliate Membership**

(i) Affiliate membership in the Association may be granted by the Board of Directors on such terms as it considers appropriate in the individual circumstances of the organization applying for such membership.

ARTICLE 3 NSSBA MEETINGS

(a) An Annual General Meeting of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association shall be held at such place as the Board of Directors determines, within three months of the end of the NSSBA fiscal year.

(b) Special meetings of the NSSBA may be convened at any time by resolution of the Executive Committee and/or the Board of Directors.

(c) A written notice of each meeting stating the day, hour and place thereof and the agenda of the business to be transacted shall be sent via mail or telecopy or by electronic means to each member board of the NSSBA not less than seven days before the date of the meeting, at such address as is shown on the registry of members of the NSSBA.

(d) A quorum for any meeting of the NSSBA shall be at least fifty-one percent (51%) of eligible voting delegates representing fifty-one percent (51%) of member school boards of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 4 DELEGATES: VOTING POWERS

(a) All members of school boards eligible for membership in the NSSBA shall be eligible to attend general meetings and special meetings of the NSSBA as delegates. Each member school board shall be assigned eight (8) votes. Each member board shall receive eight (8) voting delegate cards which must be displayed when casting a vote. Each voting delegate shall only have one vote.

(b) All delegates may speak on any motion. Only voting delegates may vote.

ARTICLE 5 DELEGATES: VOTING PROCEDURES

(a) Voting at meetings shall be by delegate cards, unless otherwise specified.

(b) Upon request by a voting delegate to reveal the vote count, the Chair shall determine the will of the meeting as to whether the vote count should be revealed. If a simple majority of voting delegates are in favour of the release of the vote count results, the results will be announced.

ARTICLE 6 ANNUAL DUES AND SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS

(a) A scale of dues and fees payable to the NSSBA by its member school boards for the current year shall be set by the Board of Directors. The assessed dues and fees shall be remitted to the NSSBA no later than sixty (60) days following commencement of the NSSBA's fiscal year. The balance of any assessed dues and fees unpaid shall bear interest thereafter at the rate of one and one-half percent (1½%) per month. If the unpaid dues and fees and interest of a member board remain unpaid for a period in excess of ninety (90) days from the due date, that member board shall thereupon cease to be a member in good standing of the NSSBA until all unpaid dues and fees and interest are fully paid.

(b) Special assessments, if any, payable to the NSSBA by its members, in accordance with Section 12 of *The Nova Scotia School Boards Association Act*, may be set by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 7 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

(a) The Board of Directors of the NSSBA shall consist of the Officers of the Association and one Director representing each of the member school boards, as outlined in Article 2 (a).

(b) At least thirty (30) days before the Annual General Meeting each member school board shall submit the name of its Director to the Nova Scotia School Boards Association for the year following that Annual General Meeting.

(c) The members of the Board of Directors, including the Officers, shall be school board members at the time of their appointment.

(d) In the event that a Director ceases to be a member of a school board, the Director shall also cease to be a Director of the NSSBA and his/her seat on the Board of Directors shall be declared vacant.

(e) A school board may appoint an alternate to attend a Board of Directors meeting in place of the appointed Director. The alternate will have all the privileges of a Director in relation to said meetings.

ARTICLE 8 TENURE OF OFFICE

(a) Members of the Board of Directors shall take office immediately following the Annual General Meeting, and shall hold office, subject to these by-laws, until their successors take office at the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting.

(b) The Board of Directors may request a member school board to remove its Director from office before the expiry date of the term of office for just cause, as determined by the Board of Directors, by a two-thirds (2/3) majority vote of the Board of Directors. The member school board would then be requested by the Board of Directors to appoint an interim Director.

ARTICLE 9 VACANCIES

(a) In the event of any position becoming vacant among the representatives of member boards on the Board of Directors, the position(s) shall be filled by an appointee from the respective member school board.

ARTICLE 10 BOARD OF DIRECTORS: DUTIES AND POWERS

(a) The business and affairs of the NSSBA shall be under the direction and control of the Board of Directors, which may exercise all powers of the NSSBA as are not required to be exercised by the NSSBA in general meeting. The Board of Directors receives reports from the Executive Committee and has the power ordinarily vested in the board of directors of a corporation.

(b) Without limiting the generality of the foregoing, the Board of Directors may:

(i) Appoint an Executive Director, and establish terms of employment and salary, and prescribe duties for the Executive Director. The Executive Director has responsibility and authority to hire and dismiss all other employees of the NSSBA, with the approval of the Executive Committee. The Executive Director has responsibility and authority to evaluate and assign all other employees of the NSSBA.

(ii) Appoint, either from its own members or others, such ad hoc committees as it may from time to time deem advisable, and prescribe their duties and functions.

(iii) Approve the annual budget for the coming year, annual membership dues/fees and special assessments.

(c) (i) Policy Development
The Board of Directors of the Association may determine the process for the development and implementation of NSSBA policies.

10 (c) (ii) Procedure Development
The NSSBA Executive Director will prepare and implement appropriate procedures to ensure successful development, communication and implementation of policy.

(d) (i) The Board of Directors shall meet not less than four times during its year in office.

(ii) Special meetings shall be called by request in writing to the President or Executive Director or any five members of the Board of Directors. Such request shall state the business in respect of which it is desired to hold a meeting.

(iii) Every notice of meeting of the Board of Directors shall state the hour, the date, and the place of meeting.

(iv) Two weeks' written notice of any meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given each member, but a meeting may be called on oral or other notice provided a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the members of the Board of Directors consent to waive the two weeks' notice.

(e) Not less than fifty percent (50%) plus one of the members of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for a meeting of that body, and a majority vote of the members present shall decide all questions. The Chair of the meeting may vote on all motions.

(f) Standing committees shall be established by the Board of Directors.

For greater clarity, reports or recommendations from Standing Committees shall flow to the Board through the Executive Committee without amendment. The Executive Committee may consider the reports/recommendations and provide advice to the Board of Directors with respect to them.

(g) The Board of Directors shall not change positions adopted by the NSSBA without the approval of the majority of voting members present at a General or Special Meeting of the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 11 BORROWING

(a) The Board of Directors may from time to time:

(i) borrow money upon the credit of the NSSBA;

(ii) limit or increase the amount to be borrowed;

(iii) issue debentures or other securities of the NSSBA and pledge or sell such debentures or other securities for such sums and at such prices as may be deemed expedient;

(iv) mortgage, hypothecate, charge or pledge all or any of the real and personal property, undertaking the rights of the NSSBA to secure any such debentures or other securities or any money borrowed or any other liability of the NSSBA.

11 (b) Nothing in this by-law contained shall limit or restrict the borrowing of money by the NSSBA on bills of exchange, or promissory notes made, drawn, accepted, or endorsed by or on behalf of the NSSBA.

(c) The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize any member of the Board of Directors or employees of the NSSBA to make arrangements with reference to the money borrowed or to be borrowed as aforesaid and as to the terms and conditions of the loan thereof and as to the securities to be given therefor, with power to vary or modify such arrangements, terms and conditions and to give such additional securities for any moneys borrowed or remaining due by the NSSBA as the Directors of the NSSBA may authorize and generally to manage, transact, and settle the borrowing of money by the NSSBA.

(d) The Board of Directors may from time to time authorize any member of the Board of Directors, or employee of the NSSBA to sign, execute and give on behalf of the NSSBA all documents, agreements, and promises necessary or desirable for the purposes aforesaid and to draw, make, accept, endorse, execute and issue cheques, promissory notes, bills of exchange, bills of lading and other negotiable or transferable instruments and the same and all renewals thereof or substitutions therefor so signed shall be binding on the NSSBA.

ARTICLE 12 OFFICERS

(a) The Officers of the NSSBA shall be: the President, the First Vice President, the Second Vice President, the Treasurer, and the Past President [or his/her replacement according to Article 15 (a)].

(b) The term of Office for the President is one year. A person may only be elected to serve as President for a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms.

(c) In the event a person is elected or appointed to serve as President on an interim basis, that person will be considered to have served one term as President if his/her interim election or appointment is for a period greater than nine (9) months.

(d) The President shall be an *ex officio* member of each Standing Committee of the Association (except the Executive and such other committees as the President chairs and participates in with full voting rights). The President shall be the Chair of the Board of Directors and shall, if present, preside at all meetings of the NSSBA, the Board of Directors, and the Executive Committee. The President shall sign all instruments which require the signature of the President, perform all duties incident to the Office, and have such other powers and duties as may, from time to time, be assigned to the President by the NSSBA or its Board of Directors. The President shall name members to standing committees annually in accordance with a process approved by the Board of Directors.

(e) The Vice President, or Vice Presidents in order of Office, shall be vested with all the powers and shall perform all the duties of the President in the absence or inability or refusal to act of the President. The Vice President(s) shall also have such other powers and duties as may, from time to time, be assigned by the NSSBA or its Board of Directors.

12(f) The Treasurer shall serve as the Chair of the Finance Committee and shall sign, with the President or other signing Officer or Officers of the NSSBA, such instruments as require the signature of the Treasurer; and shall perform such other duties as the terms of appointment call for or as the Board of Directors may from time to time require of the Treasurer.

(g) The Treasurer shall ensure that adequate systems are in place for the care and custody of all the funds and securities of the NSSBA and for the keeping of proper books and accounts. The Treasurer may, if designated as a signing officer of the Association, sign or countersign such instruments as require signature and shall perform all the duties incident to the Office that are properly required of the Treasurer by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 13 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: DUTIES AND POWERS

(a) The Executive Committee shall manage the affairs of the NSSBA between meetings of the Board of Directors and shall deal with such matters that require attention between Board of Directors meetings. The Executive Committee shall meet at dates determined by the President.

(b) The Executive Committee shall report its activities to the Board of Directors. The Executive Committee shall be considered to have rendered an account of its activities when copies of the minutes of its meetings have been circulated to the members of the Board of Directors and an opportunity has been provided for a discussion of the minutes at a meeting of the Board of Directors.

(c) The Executive Committee shall not authorize expenditures of an extraordinary nature without prior approval of the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE 14 ELECTIONS

(a) At least two (2) months before the Annual General Meeting, the Board of Directors shall appoint a Resolutions and Election Committee of three (3) Directors who are not intending to offer themselves as candidates for election as Officers of the Association in the upcoming election. The Board of Directors will designate which of those three (3) persons shall act as Chair of the Committee.

(b) The Resolutions and Election Committee shall bring to the Annual General Meeting all nominations it has received for Officers' positions for the following year. Nominations may also be made by voting delegates from the floor of the Annual General Meeting.

(c) Elections for each of the Officers' positions will be held separately, beginning with the office of President. Unsuccessful candidates for election to one Office may be nominated for and elected to any other remaining Office.

(d) The Chair of the Resolutions and Election Committee shall preside at the election of the Executive Committee. If for any reason the Chair of the Resolutions and Elections Committee cannot preside, the Board of Directors shall appoint one of the other members of the Resolutions and Election Committee to preside.

(e) The Resolutions and Election Committee shall co-ordinate the collection and review of resolutions forwarded to the Committee by member boards for the purpose of debate at the Annual General Meeting. If the Resolutions and Election Committee considers a proposed resolution to be out of order or illegal, they will discuss the matter with the submitting member board with a view to having the member board either withdraw or amend its resolution. In the event that a member board refuses to withdraw or amend a resolution which the Resolutions and Election Committee considers to be out of order or illegal, the Resolutions and Election Committee will include the resolution in the materials for the Annual General Meeting together with a notation of the Committee's views with respect to the resolution.

ARTICLE 15 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE: VACANCIES

(a) If the Office of the President becomes vacant, it will be filled by the First Vice President, and if the First Vice Presidential Office becomes vacant, it will be filled by the Second Vice President. If the Office of Past President becomes vacant, it will be filled by the most recent Past President of the Association provided he/she is still a school board member. Other Offices (including the Office of Past President if there are no former Past Presidents who are school board members when the vacancy in this Office arises) will be filled by appointment by the Board of Directors from the members of the Board of Directors.

(b) In event that all Executive Committee Offices become vacant at the same time, the Executive Director of the Association will immediately

- (i) call a special meeting of the Association for the purpose of electing Officers for the Association; or
- (ii) conduct a special election for the Officers' positions through a mailed ballot process according to the voting rights provided for in Article 4(a) of these by-laws.

For the purposes of this Article, the requirements of Article 3(b) are waived and the Executive Director shall have the authority to convene a special meeting.

ARTICLE 16 COMMITTEES

(a) The Board of Directors will establish Standing Committees. The membership and terms of reference for each Standing Committee will be available upon request. Other ad hoc committees may be appointed by the Board of Directors or the Executive as required. [See Article 10(b)(ii).]

ARTICLE 17 DOCUMENTS

(a) (i) Contracts, documents, or any instruments in writing, requiring the signature of the NSSBA, shall have the seal of the NSSBA affixed and be signed by the President or a Vice President and by the Treasurer or staff person designated by the Board of Directors, and all contracts, documents, and instruments in writing signed under authority of the Board of Directors shall be binding upon the NSSBA without any further authorization or formality.

17 (a) (ii) The seal of the NSSBA shall be kept in the custody of the Executive Director, and shall be affixed by the Executive Director to contracts, documents, and instruments in writing as aforesaid only with the authority of a resolution of the Board of Directors.

(iii) The term "contracts, documents, and instruments in writing" as used herein shall include deeds, leases, mortgages, hypotheses, charges, conveyance, transfers and assignments of property, real or personal, immovable or movable, agreements, releases, receipts and discharges for the payment of money or other obligations, conveyances, transfers and assignments of shares, stocks, bonds, debentures or other securities and other paper writings.

(b) All cheques, drafts, or orders for the payment of money and all notes and acceptances and bills of exchange shall be signed by such Officer or Officers or person or persons, whether or not Officers of the NSSBA, and in such manner as the Board of Directors may from time to time designate and as may be required by the NSSBA's bankers.

ARTICLE 18 FISCAL YEAR AND AUDITOR

(a) The fiscal year of the NSSBA shall run from April 1st to March 31st.

(b) The auditor, or auditors, for the NSSBA shall be appointed annually by the Board of Directors.

(c) All books and records of the NSSBA may be inspected by any member of the NSSBA during business hours with reasonable notice.

ARTICLE 19 AMENDMENT OR REPEAL

(a) Any changes to the by-laws may be made by a three-quarters majority vote of the voting delegates present at any Annual General or Special Meeting of the members, provided, however, that notice of such change be sent to all members not later than thirty (30) days prior to the opening of the meeting.

May 25, 2001

NSSBA

Nova Scotia
School Boards Association
Association des conseils
scolaires de la Nouvelle-Écosse

95 Victoria Road / 95, chemin Victoria
Dartmouth, NS B3A 1V2 / Dartmouth, N.-É. B3A 1V2
Telephone / Téléphone : (902) 491-2888
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www.nssba.ednet.ns.ca

June 24, 2004

Ms. Darlene Henry
Committee Clerk
Legislative Committees Office
3rd Floor, Dennis Building
1740 Granville Street
PO Box 2630, Station M
Halifax, Nova Scotia
B3J 3N5

Dear Ms. Henry :

Thank you for arranging the opportunity to meet with the Standing Committee on May 11, 2004. In answer to your request of May 19, 2004, I am pleased to provide the following:

1.	Request	Please provide, to the Committee, a copy of your Education Position Paper.
	Response	Ten (10) copies of the NSSBA "Education Position Paper" are enclosed.
2.	Request	With regard to the community use of schools, please provide to the Standing Committee a cost analysis from individual school boards in regard to this policy.
	Response	The cost impact on each of the eight (8) school Boards, as a result of the Community Access legislation, is difficult to project. The Halifax Regional School Board has projected a cost impact of approximately 125,000 to 180,000. Halifax represents approximately one-third (1/3) of the provincial school population. Each of the Boards have different policies related to community use and access; however, there could be a cost impact on each of the other seven (7) School Boards. I would suggest that each of the Boards be invited to appear before the Committee in order to provide a better estimate.

3. Request Please provide, to the Committee, insurance cost increases for school boards over the last year.

Response The information requested on insurance cost increases for the School Boards has been referred to the School Insurance Program, Diane McRae, General Manager at 864-6173. In discussions with Ms. McRae, she intends to forward to you the detailed information. The School Insurance Program (Exchange) is a separate corporate entity from the NSSBA and School Boards.

4. Request Please provide, to the Standing Committee, the terms of reference and mandate of the Nova Scotia School Boards Association.

Response Please find enclosed a copy of the Act of Corporation and by-laws of the NSSBA. Also, the NSSBA web site may be viewed at www.nssba.ednet.ns.ca.

5. Request Please provide, to the Committee, the number and percentages of gifted students presently within each Regional School Board.

Response The Nova Scotia Department of Education, and the school boards, do not collect data on numbers and percentages of students who are considered gifted and talented. Students in Nova Scotia schools who have disabilities or special needs are not identified by a disability category or label, even for funding purposes.

It would be extremely challenging to collect any such numbers or percentages, due to the fact that there is no single profile of a gifted learner. Characteristics of a gifted learner are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time. Students can show giftedness in a wide range of areas, including intellectual, creative, artistic, leadership, or specific academic fields. A student may be very gifted in one area and not in another, thus making it even more difficult for meaningful data collection.

One possible indicator of the number of students who are gifted may be indicated by the number of students who have enriched curriculum and programming.

For example, students may challenge for credit without actually enrolling in the course, or students may register for advanced credit courses. Since students may self-select for advanced level courses, this may not necessarily be a reliable indicator of the number of students who are gifted.

(For further information please view the attached information/definitions of giftedness provided by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.)

If you have any further questions, regarding the above, please do no hesitate to contact me

Sincerely,

Frank Barteaux
Executive Director
Nova Scotia School Boards Association

cc Mr. Ron Marks, President, NSSBA (letter only)
Ms. Mary Jess MacDonald, Past President, NSSBA (letter only)
Ms. Diane McRae, General Manager, School Insurance Program (letter only)

/ml
enclosure(s)

FAX TRANSMISSION

NS DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
STUDENT SERVICES DIVISION

Telephone: (902) 424-2032
Fax: (902) 424-0749
E-Mail: brucewa@gov.ns.ca

To:	Sharon Findlay NSSBA	**Date:**	June 18, 2004
Fax:	429-7405	**Pages:**	2, including cover
From:	Alex Bruce Alex Bruce Special Education Consultant		
Subject:	Response to Question Regarding Number of Gifted Students in Nova Scotia		

As we discussed by telephone, the Nova Scotia Department of Education does not collect data from Nova Scotia School Boards on the number of students who are considered gifted and talented. Students in Nova Scotia schools who have disabilities or special needs are not identified by a disability category or label, even for funding purposes.

The Department of Education's *Challenge for Excellence: Enrichment and Gifted Education Resource Guide* defines "gifted" as follows:

> "The term 'gifted' refers to students who give evidence of outstanding performance capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership, or in specific academic fields" (Page 15).

There is no single profile of a gifted learner. "The characteristics are not all inclusive and students with gifts and talents may not exhibit all of these characteristics at any given time… The process of identification should assist in determining strengths and needs to form the basis for program planning. It is not for the purpose of labelling or streaming students. Renzulli (1997) notes the difficulty in traditional identification procedures which have often restricted services to 'small numbers of high scoring students and excluded large numbers of at risk students'" (Page 15).

The Journey, Alberta Learning's handbook for parents of children who are gifted and talented, notes that "Trying to define giftedness is like trying to define other complex human characteristics such as intelligence, creativity, love, beauty or justice. How do we measure, develop and evaluate these elusive human traits?…The existence of so many descriptive terms, with so many different shades of meaning, demonstrates how elusive and wide-ranging the concept of giftedness really is" (Page 3).

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In Nova Scotia, the special needs of students who are gifted and talented are identified and addressed in accordance with the program planning process outlined in the *Special Education Policy Manual.* Gifted students do have special programming needs which can be addressed through the individualized program planning process. The program planning team includes parents and school staff as members and together they make decisions collaboratively regarding the student's educational program.

One possible indicator of the number of students who are gifted may be indicated by the number of students who have enriched curriculum and programming. For example, students may challenge for credit without actually enrolling in the course, or students may register for advanced credit courses. Since students may self-select for advanced-level courses, however, this may not necessarily be a reliable indicator of the number of students who are gifted.

I hope this information will be helpful to you in responding to the questions NSSBA has been asked to address.

c: Ann Power